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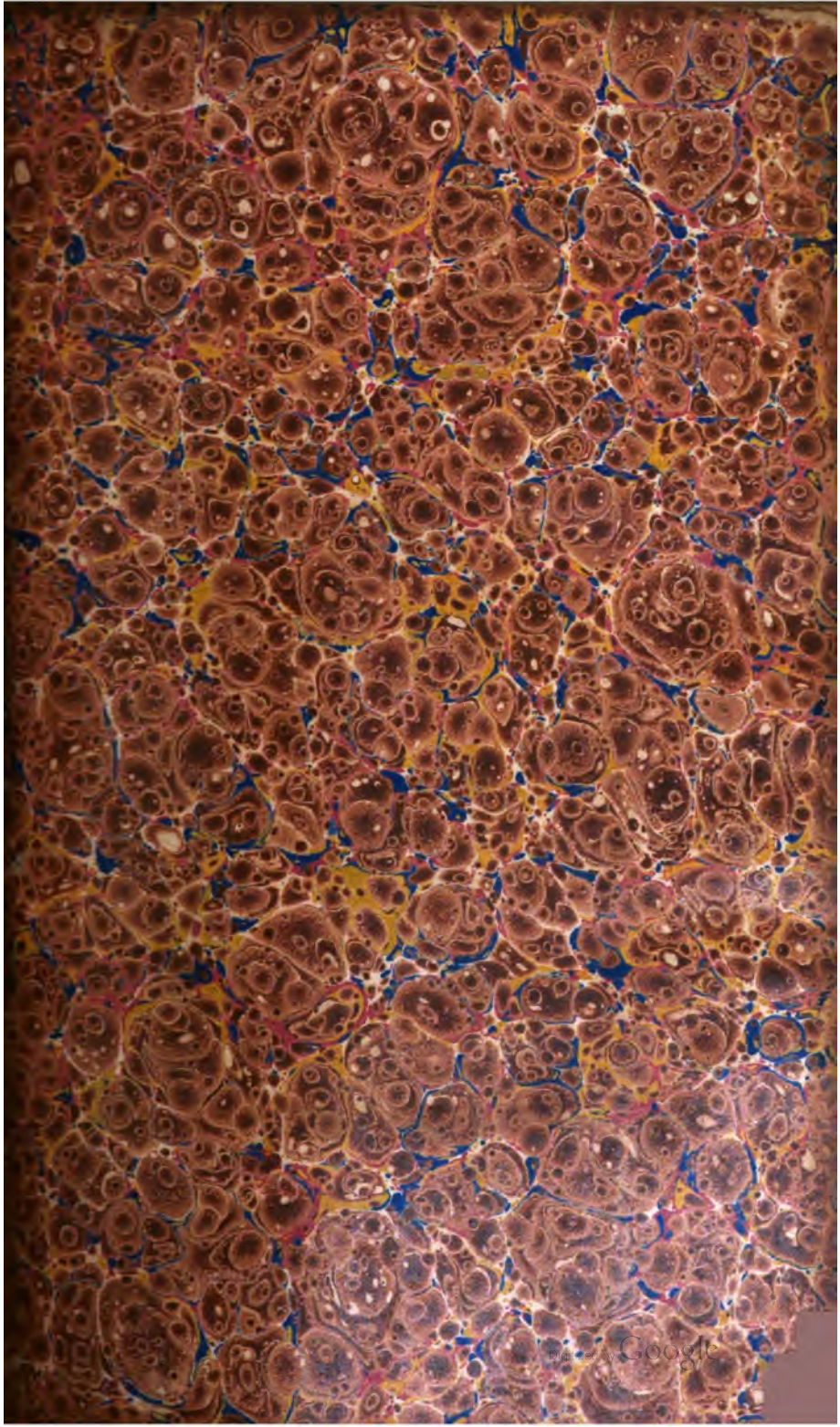
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THE

USE

OF

SACRED HISTORY;

ESPECIALLY AS ILLUSTRATING AND CONFIRMING THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF REVELATION.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

TWO DISSERTATIONS;

THE FIRST, ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HISTORY CONTAINED IN THE PENTATEUCH, AND IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA;—THE SECOND, PROVING THAT THE BOOKS ASCRIBED TO MOSES WERE ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY HIM, AND THAT HE WROTE THEM BY DIVINE INSPIRATION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By JOHN JAMIESON, D. D. F. A. S. S.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, EDINBURGH.

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ERRATA.

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Page 50. line 7. and 22. *for* future *read* ſubſequent
—— 80.——17. *for* reſpects *read* reſpect
—— 100.—— 4. *from bottom, dele,* in his Timæus,

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Page 256. line 11. *for* better *read* bitter
—— 273.—— 14. *for* road *read* rod
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THE

USE

OF

SACRED HISTORY.

PART III.

ON THE

USE OF SACRED HISTORY,

AS ILLUSTRATING AND CONFIRMING THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF REVELATION.

HAVING taken a curſory view of the Hiſtory of God's ancient people, as containing many uſeful leſſons; we may now turn our attention to Scripture-Hiſtory in general, as *confirming* or *illuſtrating* the *doctrines* of revelation. And ſo abundant is the evidence, which God is pleaſed to give us of the truth of theſe, that ſcarcely one of them wants this atteſtation.—It is only a few of the more important doctrines that we can propoſe to illuſtrate in this manner.

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SECTION I.

On the Being and Unity of God.—His Being muſt be matter of Faith.—His Unity demonſtrated, from Creation;—from his wonderful Works, for the deliverance of his People;—from the Judgments executed on the gods of the Heathen;—from the Accompliſhment of Prophecy;—from the Anſwer of Prayer;—from his Faithfulneſs to his Church;—from the whole work of Redemption;—from his Operation on the Heart.

"THE Sacred Hiſtory," as one juſtly obſerves, "is the hiſtory of God himſelf." It is deſigned as a permanent teſtimony to his *being*. This is made known by the light of nature. But it is the will of God, that we ſhould be perſuaded of this doctrine, fundamental to all religion, not merely by reaſon, but by faith; and that our faith, with reſpect to this doctrine, ſhould have the ſame foundation that it has with reſpect to any other contained in his word. Therefore, it is alſo given as matter of revelation. Nor, in the volume of inſpiration, is it merely taught as a doctrine. It is demonſtrated as a fact. We learn it not from God's word only, but alſo from his works. How often, in this reſpect, does he appeal to the works

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works of creation? "The heavens declare the "glory of God; and the firmament ſheweth his "handiwork [a]." "Aſk now the beaſts, and they "ſhall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and "they ſhall tell thee: or ſpeak to the earth, and "it ſhall teach thee; and the fiſhes of the ſea "ſhall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in "all theſe, that the hand of the LORD hath wrought "this? In whoſe hand is the ſoul of every living "thing, and the breath of all mankind [b]." In the account given of the creation, we have an exhibition of the Creator himſelf; "GOD created." In the very firſt words of the ſacred volume, the exiſtence of God is contraſted with that of all other beings. He "created in the beginning [c]," that is, "the beginning of the creature" or creation [d]. This declares that he exiſted before all things, and that he gave being, not only to all the creatures, but to time itſelf.

A ſimilar appeal is frequently made to the works of providence. "The LORD is known by the "judgment which he executeth [e]." It is thus that he replies to thoſe fools who ſay in their hearts, "No God;" who, if they do not diſbelieve the doctrine of his exiſtence, wiſh that it were not true, and act as if aſſured that it were falſe, eſpecially in perſecuting his Church. God "ſcattereth the bones of him that encampeth "againſt" her. He enables her to "put them "to ſhame, becauſe God hath deſpiſed them [f]."

a Pſal. xix. 1. b Job xii. 7.—10. c Gen. i. 1.
d Mark xiii. 19. e Pſal. ix. 16. f Pſal. liii. 1. 5.

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When he executes upon them the judgments written in his book, men are made to ſay; "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily "he is a God that judgeth in the earth [g]." They find it neceſſary to acknowledge, not only that "he is," but that he is the "rewarder of all them "that diligently ſeek him [h]." Of this, the hiſtory of the church is one continued proof; as appears from the beautiful compend given of it in the chapter of which theſe words are a part. All that they did or ſuffered was "by faith;" and their ſucceſs clearly ſhows, that their faith was not placed on a nonentity.

Next to the doctrine of the exiſtence of God, none claims a more diſtinguiſhed place than that of his *unity*. To deny the unity of the Supreme Being, is in effect to deny his exiſtence: and this may be one reaſon why the heathen are called "atheiſts in the world [i]." Hence there is no doctrine, that God hath been at more pains to inculcate and confirm. He ſeparated one nation from all the reſt of the world, as a peculiar people, for the preſervation of this important truth. He employed them in exhibiting it to others, and by means of them he confirmed it in the ſight of the heathen. "Ye are my witneſſes, ſaith JEHOVAH, "and my ſervant whom I have choſen, that ye "may know and believe me, and underſtand that "I am he: before me there was no God formed, "neither ſhall there be after me [k]."

The

g Pſal. lviii. 11. h Heb. xi. 6. i Eph. ii. 12. k Iſa. xliii. 10.

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The Sacred Hiſtory uniformly atteſts that there is but one God, and that this is JEHOVAH the God of Iſrael. The proof that JEHOVAH is God, and that this God is one, is indeed the ſame. In many paſſages of Scripture, theſe two are inſeparably conjoined. But even where the unity of God is not expreſsly declared, the revelation of himſelf as JEHOVAH implies the doctrine of his abſolute unity. This name itſelf excludes every idea of an equal. He will not give the glory of it to another: for it denotes his independence and ſelf-exiſtence, and therefore the unity of his eſſence. Hence, all thoſe operations by which he manifeſts that he is JEHOVAH, equally declare him to be the One God.

The law, given to God's peculiar people, is a key to their hiſtory, and their hiſtory is a practical commentary on their law, and a continued proof of its divine origin. As ſeveral of the precepts of the moral law, and many of the poſitive injunctions, teach or guard the doctrine of the unity; when God would commit this law to the church, he infolds it in an hiſtorical narrative, which throws the greateſt light on this fundamental doctrine.

1. He would not have the ſons of Jacob to conſider him merely as their Father, who had "made "them, and eſtabliſhed" them, as a people: for, like other nations, they might have believed this, however inconſiſtently, without acknowledging that he was the one true God. He therefore re-

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veals himſelf as "JEHOVAH, the *creator* of the "ends of the earth[l];" and addreſſes his peculiar people in this language: "Thus ſaith JE-"HOVAH *thy redeemer*, and he that formed thee "from the womb, I am JEHOVAH that *maketh all* "*things*, and ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, "that ſpreadeth abroad the earth by myſelf[m]." He accordingly prefaces the volume of revelation with a particular account of the work of creation, which none but himſelf could give: and from this account, as well as from a great many other paſſages, it is moſt evident that this was wholly the work of One Being. The idolatry of the Gentiles conſiſted in worſhipping the creatures inſtead of God. To prevent the imitation of this idolatry, and to illuſtrate its abſurdity, he enumerates the various parts of creation, and ſhews that they were all the works of his hands. The moſt of the heathen nations worſhipped the hoſt of heaven, either expreſsly, or under the diſguiſe of different proper names or peculiar ſymbols. But, in the hiſtory of creation, the church is taught that the ſun, moon, and ſtars were all the workmanſhip of her God. For he who "created the "heaven and the earth[n]," "finiſhed all the hoſt "of them[o]." On this ſubject, Boſſuet has an obſervation, which merits our attention. "It plea-"ſed the great Artificer," he ſays, "to create the "light, even before he reduced it to the form he "gave it in the ſun and ſtars: becauſe he meant "to teach us, that thoſe great and glorious lumi-"naries,

l Iſa. xl. 28. m Iſa. xliv. 24. n Gen. i. 1. o Gen. ii. 2.

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" naries, of which ſome have thought fit to make " deities, had, in themſelves, neither that precious " and ſhining matter, whereof they were compo- " ſed, nor the admirable form to which we ſee " them reduced [p]."

It was held in a great part of the Eaſt, that there were two firſt principles; the one, the cauſe of good; the other, of evil; the one preſiding over light, and the other over darkneſs. But the ſacred hiſtorian declares that light and darkneſs are equally under the power of the God of Iſrael [q]. The language of God in his prophetical addreſs to Cyrus, contains a beautiful illuſtration of this hiſtory. Its force and beauty eſpecially appear, when we reflect that Cyrus was the leader of that very people who zealouſly adhered to the doctrine of two firſt principles, and with whom it ſeems to have originated. " I am JEHOVAH, " and there is none elſe, there is no God beſides " me: I girded thee, though thou haſt not known " me: that they may know from the riſing of the " ſun, and from the weſt, that there is none be- " ſides me, I am JEHOVAH, and there is none elſe. " I form the *light* and create *darkneſs:* I make " *peace* and create *evil:* I JEHOVAH do all theſe " things [r]."

The heathen nations " changed the glory of the " uncorruptible God, into an image made like to " corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed " beaſts, and creeping things [s]." The worſhip of

 the

p Univerſal Hiſt. Vol. i. Part 2.
q Gen. i. 3.—5.
r Iſa. xlv. 5.—7.
s Rom. i. 23.

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the Egyptians was uncommonly vile. They worſhipped the ox, the lion, the dog, the cat, the goat, the ape, the crocodile, the ichneumon, &c. The Iſraelites, who had ſojourned ſo long among this idolatrous race, were deeply tainted with their pollutions. To pour contempt on this debaſing worſhip, God carries his people back to the beginning of all things; and ſhews them the fowl generated from the waters, and the quadruped and reptile riſing from the earth, at his command. If the body of man himſelf was formed from the duſt [s], it muſt be a very unfit image of its Former: as it afterwards appears, from the denunciation of the ſentence of death, that nothing could be more abſurd than to deify and adore a dead man. Well, therefore, may we ſay with Hezekiah; "O JEHOVAH of hoſts,—thou art the "God, even thou alone of all the kingdoms of "the earth; thou haſt made heaven and earth [t]."

II. He records the *wonderful works* which he performed, and the *temporal deliverances* which he gave to his Church, as proofs of his being the only true God. She, on this ground, acknowledges his unity: "Thou art great, and doſt wonderous things: thou art GOD alone [u]." He appeals to the redemption which he ſhould give his people from Egypt, in proof of his claim to the character of JEHOVAH, and of his peculiar relation to them; "I will redeem you with a ſtretched-out arm, and with great judgment. And I "will

s Gen. ii. 7. t Iſa. xxxvii. 16. u Pſal. lxxxvi. 10.

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" will take you to me for a people, and I will be " to you a God: and ye ſhall know that I am JE- " HOVAH your God, which bringeth you out from " under the burdens of the Egyptians[v]." It was his will that his unity ſhould appear from theſe works. Therefore he thus addreſſes Iſrael: " Hath God aſ- " ſayed to take him a nation from the midſt of ano- " ther nation, by temptations, by ſigns and by won- " ders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a " ſtretched-out arm, and by great terrors, accord- " ing to all that JEHOVAH your God did for you " in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was " ſhewed, that thou mighteſt know that JEHO- " VAH he is God; there is *none elſe beſides him*." By the record of theſe illuſtrious facts, he would have his people perpetually reminded of this fundamental doctrine, and confirmed in the belief of it. For he adds: " Know therefore this day, " and conſider it in thine heart, that JEHOVAH he " is God in heaven above, and upon the earth be- " neath: *there is none elſe*[w]."

1. With this view were thoſe works recorded, which immediately diſplayed the *mercy* of God towards his people. For they were recorded for the uſe of the church in all ages, with the very ſame deſign with which they were at firſt performed. Were the Iſraelites miraculouſly preſerved in the deſert? It was to prove, that their God alone was worthy of faith and adoration; " I " have led you forty years in the wilderneſs: your " clothes

v Exod vi. 6, 7. w Deut. iv. 34, 35. 39.

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" clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy " ſhoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have " not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine, " or ſtrong drink: that ye might know that I am " JEHOVAH your God [x]." Did the waters of Jordan divide before them, as ſoon as the feet of the prieſts reſted in them? It was that they might know, that " the living God was among them;" and that the ark which paſſed over before them, was " the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all " the earth [y]."

2. His works of *judgment* have the ſame end. When he confounds his enemies, and troubles them for ever; when he puts them to ſhame, and makes them to periſh; it is that " men may know, " that he whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, is the " moſt high over all the earth [z]." It is his pleaſure, that even his incorrigible adverſaries may have ſuch ample evidence of this, that they ſhall either acknowledge it, or be left without excuſe. He therefore ſays to Pharaoh; " I will ſend all " my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy ſer- " vants, and upon thy people: that thou mayeſt " know that there is none like me in all the " earth [a]." Is Nebuchadnezzar driven from his dignity? Hath he a beaſt's heart given unto him? It is " to the intent that the living may know " that the Moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of " men [b]."

3. From

x Deut. xxix. 5, 6. y Joſh. iii. 10, 11. z Pſal. lxxxiii. 18.
a Exod. ix. 14. See alſo Ezek. xxv. 17. b Dan. iv. 17.

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3. From the wonderful works recorded in Scripture, it is evident, that the *power* of JEHOVAH is alike in *all* the *regions* of the earth. The heathen had ſtrange ideas of divine power. They not only affixed limits to it; but ſuppoſed that the power of one god was confined to one territory, and that of another to another. A people who, according to their vain imaginations, were perfectly ſafe under the protection of their tutelar deity, could derive no benefit from one who was a ſtranger to their country. If worſhipped by a hoſtile nation, they frequently viewed him as their enemy. They indeed conſidered their deities in the ſame light with their earthly princes, whoſe dominions had certain boundaries, and who protected their ſubjects at the expence of their neighbours. They ſeem to have imagined, that the power of particular deities bore an exact proportion to the comparative ſtrength or weakneſs of the people that worſhipped them; or to the grandeur or apparent meanneſs of their worſhip. When God ſent lions among the heathen who had been placed in the land of Iſrael by the king of Aſſyria, they conſidered the viſitation as a token of his diſpleaſure, and therefore of his power; but had no idea that this extended beyond the limits of Paleſtine. They ſuppoſed that he had ſent theſe lions to "ſlay them, be-"cauſe they knew not the manner of *the God* "*of the land* [c]."

Why

c 2 Kings xvii. 26.

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Why was the army of Sennacherib deſtroyed; and why was this ſignal deſtruction recorded? That it might be known, that the God of Iſrael was the only true God. That haughty conqueror, when he came againſt Judah, imagined that he had to do with a deity like thoſe of the conquered countries. "Who was there," does he ſay, "among "all the gods of the nations that my fathers ut-"terly deſtroyed, that could deliver his people "out of mine hand, that your God ſhould be able "to deliver you? As the gods of the nations of "other lands, have not delivered their people out "of mine hand, ſo ſhall not the God of Hezekiah "deliver his people out of mine hand [d]." Jeruſalem, he concluded, muſt become an eaſy prey, becauſe ſhe had not an hoſt of images to defend her; and the ark, the only thing to which he could give the name, ſeemed unworthy of being compared with thoſe he had already conquered. "As "my hands have found the kingdoms of the idols, "and whoſe graven images did excel them of Je-"ruſalem and of Samaria: ſhall I not, as I have "done to Samaria and her idols, ſo do to Jeruſa-"lem and her idols [e]?" He argues, in proof of the imbecility of the God of Iſrael, from his tame ſubmiſſion to the inſults that, as he ſuppoſed, Hezekiah had offered to him, in overthrowing his images, and impoveriſhing his worſhip: evidently inſinuating, that if he could not avenge himſelf on ſo poor a prince as Hezekiah, one who had vanquiſhed ſo many nations could have nothing to

[d] 2 Chron. xxxii. 14. 17. [e] Iſa. x. 10, 11.

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to fear from him. Thus he impiouſly addreſſes the ſervants of the king: "If ye ſay unto me, "We truſt in JEHOVAH our God: is not that he, "whoſe high places, and whoſe altars Hezekiah "hath taken away, and hath ſaid,—Ye ſhall wor- "ſhip before this altar in Jeruſalem[f]?"

Hezekiah, in his ſolemn addreſs to God, repreſents this as a controverſy in which the honour of deity is peculiarly concerned. He pleads for deliverance, and he obtains it, as a proof of the ſupreme dominion of JEHOVAH, of his abſolute unity as God. He ſaid, "O JEHOVAH God of Iſrael, "which dwelleſt between the cherubims, thou "art the God, even thou alone, of all the king- "doms of the earth, thou haſt made heaven and "earth.—Now therefore,—ſave thou us out of "his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth "may know that thou art the LORD God, even "thou only." And what anſwer did he receive? "Thus ſaith JEHOVAH God of Iſrael, That which "thou haſt prayed to me againſt Sennacherib king "of Aſſyria, I have heard. This is the word "that JEHOVAH hath ſpoken concerning him,— "Becauſe thy rage againſt me, and thy tumult is "come up into mine ears, therefore I will put "my hook in thy noſe, and my bridle in thy lips, "and I will turn thee back by the way by which "thou cameſt[g]." This arrogant ravager is deſcribed as a wild beaſt, muzzled and managed at the will of his keeper: and, as if God would give him the moſt humiliating proof of his folly, he is ſaved

f 2 Kings xviii. 22. g 2 Kings xix. 15. 19. 20. 21. 28.

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ſaved from the ſtroke of the deſtroying angel, and ſuffered to return into his own land, that even *there* he might be a monument of the impotency of his idol, and of the power of JEHOVAH, the God of Iſrael, whom he had blaſphemed. For he was ſlain by his ſons, while "worſhipping in the "houſe of Niſroch *his god* [h]."

4. The ſame wonderful works afford a demonſtration of the unity of God, as they diſplay his abſolute power over *all nature*. The heathen not only divided the nations, but made a partition of nature itſelf among their falſe gods. One preſided over the thunder, another over the wind. The power of one was greateſt on earth, the dominion of another was confined to the ſea. One was lord of heaven, another reigned in hell. They had their gods of the hills, and their gods of the valleys; their gods of the woods, and their gods of the waters. But JEHOVAH hath manifeſted his dominion over all the creatures, and made every part of nature obedient to his word. As he had diſplayed his ſovereignty over the thunder, in rendering it the inſtrument of deſtruction in Egypt, he did ſo in like manner in cauſing it to ceaſe. Thus Moſes ſaid to Pharaoh; "I will ſpread out my hands to JEHOVAH, "and the thunder ſhall ceaſe, neither ſhall there "be any more hail, that thou mayeſt know how "that the earth is JEHOVAH's [i]." He deſtroyed the frogs which he had ſent, and ſevered the land of

h 2 Kings xix. 37. i Exod. ix. 29.

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of Goſhen, where his people dwelt, from the reſt of Egypt, ſo that there were no ſwarms of flies there; that he might ſhew that the meaneſt and minuteſt creatures were his hoſts, and that the Egyptians might know that there was "none like "unto JEHOVAH," that he was "the LORD in the "midſt of the earth[k]." The Egyptians learned to their coſt that the wind and ſea obeyed him. After they ventured into the channel of the Red Sea, they cried out in deſpair, "Let us flee from "the face of Iſrael; for JEHOVAH fighteth for "them againſt the Egyptians[l]." The Syrians, when defeated by the Iſraelites, gave this as the reaſon; "Their gods are gods of the hills, there- "fore they were ſtronger than we; but let us "fight againſt them in the plain, and ſurely we "ſhall be ſtronger than they." But even under the wicked Ahab, God crowned Iſrael with victory, to vindicate his claim to univerſal dominion. "There came a man of God, and ſpake unto the "king of Iſrael, and ſaid, Thus ſaith JEHOVAH, "Becauſe the Syrians have ſaid, JEHOVAH is God "of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies; "therefore will I deliver all this great multitude "into thine hand, and ye ſhall know that I am "JEHOVAH[m]."

In the antediluvian age, the poſterity of Cain had openly apoſtatized from the worſhip of God, and even the profeſſors of the true religion almoſt univerſally lived as if there had been no God. He was therefore pleaſed, in the moſt awful manner,

k Exod. viii. 10. 22. l Chap. xiv. 25. m 1 Kings xx. 23. 28.

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ner, to assert his exclusive claim to the rights of deity, and to display his universal dominion. This he did by the deluge. No one could destroy the earth, but its Creator and Lord. "JEHOVAH "said, I will destroy man whom I have created, "from the face of the earth, both man and beast. "—Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters "upon the earth.—Every living substance that I "have made will I destroy [n]." This tremendous dispensation was especially designed as a lesson to succeeding generations. Noah and Shem, in whose line the promise ran, lived for centuries after the flood, as witnesses of the truth of this judgment, and thus of the divine unity and dominion. They could appeal to this awful proof, in contending against the corruptions of the new world, and particularly against the first appearances of idolatry. In succeeding ages, a similar appeal was made, by the professors of the true religion, to the deluge as a fact that could admit of no dispute, and as a decisive evidence of the power and providence of the God whom they adored. Did the wicked say, "How doth God "know? can he judge through the dark cloud?" His servants had this reply in readiness; "Hast "thou marked the old way which wicked men "have trodden? which were cut down out of "time, whose foundation was overflown with a "flood; which said unto God, Depart from us; "and what can the Almighty do for them [o]?"

5. By

n Gen. vi. 7. 17.; vii. 4. o Job xxii. 13. 15.—17.

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5. By means of these wonderful works, even the *heathen* have been *convinced*, that JEHOVAH was the *God* of heaven and earth. Naaman the Syrian, when delivered from his leprosy, in consequence of using the means prescribed by the prophet of JEHOVAH, made this confession; "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all "the earth but in Israel[p]." Nebuchadnezzar was a bitter enemy to the God of Israel, and a violent persecutor of his people. He had said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will "sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in "the sides of the north[q]." He, accordingly, had destroyed the temple of God, carried off the sacred vessels, and "put them in his temple at Babylon[r]." Israel had never known an oppressor like him. Others had "devoured him," by feeding on his flesh. But this unrelenting adversary accomplished a more thorough destruction: "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his "bones[s]." We no where read of a prouder or more insolent enemy of God. He indeed set himself up as a god to his subjects; for he would have them all to believe as he did, and to worship that idol to which he decreed divine homage. But even this haughty adversary God was "able to abase." When he saw the miraculous deliverance of the three faithful witnesses, who would not on any account bow the knee to

p 2 Kings v. 15. q Isa. xiv. 13. r 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.
s Jer. l. 17.

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the image which he had erected, he was convinced of the ſuperiority of their God to all his idols. "There is no other God," he ſaid, "who can de-"liver after this ſort[t]." But as his conviction was partial, it ſeems to have been only of ſhort duration. JEHOVAH would therefore humble him yet more. He muſt himſelf be the monument of almighty power. He was as a beaſt before God, and he had acted the part of a wild beaſt to his heritage. He is therefore ſent to herd with the beaſts, and "a beaſt's heart is given unto him," till he ſhould "know that the Moſt High ruleth "in the kingdom of men[u]." After this awful viſitation, we find this once haughty monarch making the following declaration: "Mine un-"derſtanding returned unto me, and I bleſſed the "Moſt High, and I praiſed and honoured him "that liveth for ever, whoſe dominion is an ever-"laſting dominion, and his kingdom is from ge-"neration to generation. And all the inhabi-"tants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and "he doth according to his will in the army of "heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; "and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, "What doſt thou[v]?"

Cyrus was a ſtranger to the God of Iſrael. But this God thus addreſſes him in prophecy, delivered ſeveral centuries before he was born; "I will "looſe the loins of kings, to open before him the "two-leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be "ſhut.—And I will give thee the treaſures of "darkneſs,

t Dan. iii. 29. u Chap. iv. 25. v Ver. 34, 35.

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" darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places, " that thou mayeſt know that I JEHOVAH, which " call thee by thy name, am the God of Iſrael [w]." And Cyrus was made to *know* this, and ſeems to have had ſome ſort of perſuaſion of the truth of divine revelation. Therefore he made this proclamation throughout his dominions: " Thus " ſaith Cyrus the king of Perſia, JEHOVAH the " God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms " of the earth, and he hath charged me to build " him an houſe at Jeruſalem which is in Judah. " Who is there among you of all his people? his " God be with him, and let him go up to Jeru- " ſalem,—and build the houſe of JEHOVAH the " God of Iſrael, (he is the God) [x]."

In like manner, when Darius knew the miraculous deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions, he thus proclaimed the power of JEHOVAH to all his ſubjects: " I make a decree, that " in every dominion of my kingdom, men trem- " ble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he " is the living God, and ſtedfaſt for ever, and his " kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed, and " his dominion ſhall be even unto the end. He " delivereth and reſcueth; and he worketh ſigns " and wonders in heaven and in earth [y]."

III. The *judgment* that JEHOVAH hath executed on the *gods* of the heathen, affords a ſtriking demonſtration of his being the only true God. They could give no protection to their worſhippers, for

w Iſa. xlv. 1. 3. x Ezra i. 2. 3. y Dan. vi. 25.—27.

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they could not deliver themſelves. One bitter ingredient in the tenth and laſt plague that God brought upon the Egyptians, was the deſtruction of their idol-deities. This proof would he give his people, that he alone had a claim to the character of God. "I will paſs through the land of "Egypt this night, and will ſmite all the firſt-"born in the land of Egypt, both man and beaſt, "and againſt all the gods of Egypt I will execute "judgment; I am JEHOVAH [z]." Doubtleſs, it was alſo meant as a reproof to the Iſraelites, for their folly and wickedneſs in adopting the impure worſhip of Egypt; and as a warning againſt ſuch idolatry for the future. For he thus ſpeaks concerning Iſrael many ages afterwards: "In the "day that I lifted up mine hand to bring them "forth of the land of Egypt,—then ſaid I unto "them, Caſt away every man the abominations "of his eyes, and defile not yourſelves with the "idols of Egypt: I am JEHOVAH your God [a]." Some think that the threatening refers to the deſtruction of thoſe beaſts that the Egyptians worſhipped. Indeed, as they worſhipped four-footed beaſts, and fowls, and creeping things, it is natural enough to ſuppoſe, that a number of theſe gods would be involved in the deſtruction of the firſt-born; for it extended to both man and beaſt. But it is ſcarcely credible, that all the brute creatures which they worſhipped were firſt-born; and we know that they had deities of another kind. Now, this judgment reached *all* their gods. It is therefore neceſſary to

[z] Exod. xii. 12. [a] Ezek. xx. 6, 7.

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to ſuppoſe, that it operated in various ways. It is probable that the divine vengeance extended to all the brutes which they worſhipped; and that at the ſame time their idols were deſtroyed. The Hebrew writers ſay, that God "threw down "all the images of their abominations, ſo that "they were broken in pieces [b]." According to the Chaldee Paraphraſt, the idols of metal were melted, thoſe of ſtone or earth were broken, and thoſe of wood were reduced to aſhes. In the writings of the heathen, there are various alluſions to this event; although, according to their uſual way, mixed with fables [c].

Similar was the judgment executed on Dagon the idol of the Philiſtines, when they preſumed to bring in the ark, as a captive, into the temple of their god. Their deity fell down proſtrate before the ark of God, and was broken in pieces; ſo that his fooliſh worſhippers were forced to make this acknowledgment to the honour of the God of Iſrael; "His hand is ſore upon us, and "upon Dagon our god [d]."

JEHOVAH pours contempt on the idols of Babylon, when predicting their fate: "Bel boweth "down, Nebo ſtoopeth, their idols were upon the "beaſts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were "heavy laden, they are a burden to the weary "beaſt [e]." The prophecy refers to the deſtruction of theſe idols by the Perſians, who becauſe of the precioufneſs of the metals of which they were

 made,

b Pirke Eliezer. chap. 48. c Vid. Bocharti Hierozoic. vol. i. p. 343. 616. 644. Witſii Egyptiac, p. 219. Pol. Synops in loc.
d 1 Sam. v. 3, 4. 7. e Iſa. xlvi. 1.

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made, brake them in pieces, and carried them away into their own country, to convert them to other uſes. Thus he alſo ſpeaks by Jeremiah; "Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach "is broken in pieces: her idols are confounded, "her images are broken in pieces[f]." And he appeals to the general deſtruction he ſhould bring on the idols of the heathen, as a proof of their vanity, and of his own ſole dominion. "JEHO-"VAH is the true God, he is the living God, and "an everlaſting king: at his wrath the earth ſhall "tremble, and the nations ſhall not be able to "abide his indignation. Thus ſhall ye ſay unto "them, The gods that have not made the heavens, "and the earth, even they ſhall periſh from the "earth, and from under theſe heavens.—They "are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time "of their viſitation they ſhall periſh. The por-"tion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the "former of all things;—JEHOVAH of hoſts is his "name[g]."

IV. The accompliſhment of *prophecy* is another proof of the divine unity. This is not merely a proof from facts, but one of the moſt ſtriking kind that can poſſibly be conceived. We have a twofold view of the ſame fact. We ſee it firſt in the book of prophecy; and then, perhaps, many centuries after, in the book of providence. We view it firſt, as it exiſts in the divine mind and immutable decree; and then, as it is actually brought into

[f] Jer. l. 2. [g] Jer. x. 10, 11. 15, 16.

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to being, with the moſt minute conformity to its prototype. Prophecy is thus a living, a permanent, a perpetual hiſtory, that ſhall continue to ſhed its precious light on the Church, and on the world, till time ſhall be no more.

Need we wonder, then, that God ſhould frequently refer to it, in proof of his abſolute and unrivalled perfection? When he proclaims that peculiar honour which he had conferred on his ancient people, as the witneſſes of his unity, he immediately appeals to the prophecies he had delivered to them, and to their illuſtrious anceſtors, as verified by the event. "Ye are my witneſſes, "ſaith JEHOVAH:—that ye may know and be-"lieve me, and underſtand that I am HE: before "me there was no God formed, neither ſhall there "be after me.—I have declared, and have ſaved, "and I have ſhewed, when there was no ſtrange "god among you: therefore ye are my witneſſes, "ſaith JEHOVAH, that I am God[h]."—"I am the "firſt, and I am the laſt, and beſides me there is "no God. And who, as I, ſhall call, and ſhall de-"clare it, and ſet it in order for me, ſince I ap-"pointed the ancient people? and the things that "are coming, and ſhall come, let them ſhew unto "them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not "I told thee from that time, and have declared "it? ye are even my witneſſes. Is there a God "beſides me? yea, there is no god, I know not "any[i]."—"Remember the former things of old, "for I am God, and there is none elſe, I am God,

h Iſa. xliii. 10. 12.

i Iſa. xliv. 6.—8.

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" and there is none like me, declaring the end " from the beginning, and from ancient times the " things that are not yet done, saying, My coun- " sel shall stand, and I will do all my plea- " sure [k]."

We have formerly seen, that God appeals to his power manifested in creation, in proof of his being the only true God. But, in revealing himself to an obstinate and unbelieving people, he does not rest the evidence of his claim in this respect merely on his own testimony, or refer to that particular account of the work of creation which no one but himself could give. He produces another species of evidence, arising from his wonderful works in behalf of his Church, especially in relation to preceding predictions. This is a combined proof of the most convincing kind. Is it true, that the work of creation clearly demonstrates that He, to whom it belongs, is God, and God alone? While the wonderful works of JEHOVAH afford a display of the same almighty power which was manifested in creation; these, as verifying his word of prophecy, in which he has asserted his claim to creative power, incontestably prove the justness of his claim to the character of Creator, and at the same time shew that there is, that there can be, " no God besides " him." When, therefore, we find this assertion of creative power mingling itself in the prophecies concerning the deliverance of the Church, we are not to view it in the light of a parenthesis,

[k] Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. See also chap. xlv. 21, 22.; xlviii. 3.—5. 12. 14. 16.

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ſis, merely expreſſing the dignity of the ſpeaker. It is indeed a diſtinguiſhed branch of that evidence, which is exhibited for the preſent confirmation of the faith of thoſe who already believe, as declaring the certainty of the event; and at the ſame time denotes that the event itſelf, when it ſhall take place, ſhall, in its connexion, afford a ſufficient ground of conviction to thoſe who have formerly rejected the divine teſtimony. Of this kind of evidence, we have various examples. "Thus ſaith JEHOVAH thy Redeemer,—I am JE-"HOVAH that *maketh* all things; that ſtretcheth "forth the heavens alone; that ſpreadeth abroad "the earth by myſelf:—that *confirmeth* the word "of his ſervant, and *performeth* the counſel of "his meſſengers; that ſaith to Jeruſalem, Thou "ſhalt be *inhabited*:—that ſaith to the deep, *Be "dry*; and I will dry up thy rivers: that ſaith of "Cyrus, He is my ſhepherd, and ſhall *perform* "all my pleaſure; even ſaying to Jeruſalem, Thou "ſhalt be *built*; and to the temple, Thy founda-"tion ſhall be *laid*[l]." What a beautiful connexion here, between creative power, omniſcience, and the completion of prophecy in wonderful operations! To the ſame purpoſe is the following language: "Thus ſaith JEHOVAH,—Aſk "me of *things to come* concerning my ſons.—I "have *made* the earth, and *created* man upon it. "—I have raiſed him up," that is, Cyrus, "in "righteouſneſs, and I will direct all his ways[m]." In the uſe of this argument, faith may either deſcend

l Iſa. xliv. 24.—28. m Iſa. xlv. 11.—13. See alſo Jer. li. 14, 15.

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ſcend from the creative power of God already believed, to a firm perſuaſion of the accompliſhment of the prophecy; or, as excited by the manifeſtation of God's faithfulneſs and power in fulfilling the prophecy, it may aſcend to a firm perſuaſion of his being the Creator and the only true God. Faith, indeed, as it ſtill reſpects the power of God, finds great encouragement in viewing this perfection as manifeſted in creation. For there is no work, which it is called to believe, that can be too hard for Him who formed all things of nothing. Hence Abraham, when called to believe againſt hope, that he ſhould be the father of a ſeed like the ſand of the ſea, found no obſtacle to believing this, while he credited the doctrine of creation. "He believed God,—who "calleth the things that be not as though they "were[n]." Hence alſo we are commanded to commit our ſouls to him, as to a faithful Creator[o]: where his infinite faithfulneſs and almighty power are conjoined, as affording a ſtrong ground of confidence.

v. JEHOVAH hath manifeſted that he is the one true God, by *anſwering* the *prayers* of his worſhippers: and many remarkable inſtances of this are recorded, for confirming our faith in this important doctrine. Elijah propoſed to the people of Iſrael, that the deciſion of the controverſy between JEHOVAH and Baal ſhould turn on this hinge. He ſaid to them, "Call ye on the name "of

n Rom. iv. 17. o 1 Pet. iv. 19.

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" of your gods, and I will call on the name of JE-
" HOVAH: and the God that anſwereth by fire,
" let him be God." They all approved of this as a moſt equitable condition. The falſe prophets " called on the name of Baal from morning " even until noon, ſaying, O Baal, hear us. But " there was no voice, nor any that *anſwered*.— " When mid-day was paſt, and they propheſied " until the time of the offering of the evening ſa-
" crifice, there was neither voice, nor any to an-
" ſwer, nor any that regarded." For the gods of the nations " have ears, but they hear not." The fire from heaven having conſumed the ſacrifice offered by Elijah, the multitude were convinced, that the God whom he worſhipped was the only true God. " When all the people ſaw it, they " fell on their faces: and they ſaid, JEHOVAH he " is the God; JEHOVAH he is the God[p]." In like manner, the deliverance which God gave the Jews from Sennacherib, when he ſent forth his angel, and ſlew an hundred and eighty-five thouſand of the Aſſyrians, was in anſwer to the prayer of Hezekiah. This good king ſought deliverance, expreſsly as an evidence that JEHOVAH alone had a right to adoration. The plea was accepted, and the deliverance was given as the anſwer of his prayers. Hezekiah ſaid, " O JEHOVAH our God, " I beſeech thee, ſave thou us out of his hand, " that all the kingdoms of the earth may know " that thou art JEHOVAH God, even thou only." And this was the gracious anſwer: " Thus ſaith " JEHOVAH

[p] 1 Kings xviii. 24. 26. 29. 39.

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"JEHOVAH the God of Iſrael, That which thou "haſt prayed to me againſt Sennacherib king of "Aſſyria, I have heard [q]." On this ſtriking part of the character of her God, that he heareth prayer, the Church grounds her confidence as to the converſion of all nations to the faith: "O thou "that heareſt prayer, unto thee ſhall all fleſh "come.—By terrible things in righteouſneſs wilt "thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation; who "art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, "and of them that are afar off on the ſea [r]."

Often hath our God vindicated his claim to this character, by anſwering the prayers of his Church in the time of her neceſſity, even when his operation hath been nowiſe miraculous. Hence Jeremiah uttered this language, during a famine occaſioned by a great drought; "Are there any "among the vanities of the Gentiles that can "cauſe rain? or can the heavens give ſhowers? "art not thou HE, O JEHOVAH our God?" HE, who alone can give rain? "therefore we will "wait upon thee, for thou haſt made all theſe "things [s]." He ſignally manifeſted his power in this reſpect, in anſwer to the prayer of Elijah, both in judgment and in mercy. "He prayed "earneſtly that it might not rain; and it rained "not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and "ſix months. And he prayed again, and the "heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth "her fruit [t]."

VI. The

q 2 Kings xix. 19, 20. r Pſal. lxv. 2. 5. s Jer. xiv. 22.
t James v. 17, 18.

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VI. The LORD hath ſtill manifeſted that he is the only living and true God, by his *faithfulneſs* to his Church, and by *remembering* his *covenant*, eſpecially when ſhe hath turned to him. Therefore Solomon thus addreſſes him; "JEHOVAH God "of Iſrael, there is no God like thee, in heaven "above, or in earth beneath, who keepeſt cove-"nant and mercy with thy ſervants, that walk "before thee with all their heart[u]." Of this faithfulneſs the Jews were ſtanding witneſſes, while they adhered to him. In various reſpects, it was ſucceſſively atteſted by miraculous operation. As long as the land, according to the divine commandment, enjoyed her Sabbaths, they received a double harveſt; and while all the males, who were able to travel, were aſſembled at Jeruſalem during the ſolemn feaſts, the enemy never "deſired their land." The heathen could boaſt nothing of this nature. Their gods made no difference between obedience and diſobedience.

VII. The hiſtory of the work of *redemption*, in its various ſtages from the fall downwards, is one continued demonſtration of the unity of God. It diſplays an evident unity of deſign and operation. The eye, that views the divine diſpenſations partially, may oppoſe one to another. It may oppoſe the patriarchal diſpenſation to that of the law, and both theſe to the goſpel. Hence ſome of the early heretics repreſented the God of the Jews as quite a different being from the God of the Chriſtians.

[u] 1 Kings viii. 23.

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ſtians. But thoſe who view this matter fairly and impartially, diſcern the moſt beautiful harmony. They perceive that the one illuſtrates and confirms the other; that while the Moſaic diſpenſation derives its perfection from the Chriſtian, the Chriſtian derives its evidence from the Moſaic; and that both hinge on that given to the patriarchs. Thus the Church finds the moſt abundant reaſon for this ſong; "He is the Rock, his work "is perfect [v]." "As for God, his way is perfect. "—For who is God ſave JEHOVAH? and who is "a rock ſave our God [w]?"

As there is the moſt beautiful harmony in all the parts of divine revelation, although written in a great variety of ages; as they have all one great ſubject, the redemption of the Church by the Son of God in the nature of man; as one ſpirit evidently pervades and animates the whole, uniformly "teſtifying the ſufferings of Chriſt, and "the glory that ſhould follow;" a ſimilar harmony is diſcernible in the operations of Providence. Of theſe we have an almoſt uninterrupted record for more than four thouſand years. But they all evidently concentrate in one point. They are all directed to the work of redemption. They all conſpire towards its accompliſhment; ſome of them immediately, and others more remotely. The firſt goſpel-promiſe, concerning the ſeed of the woman bruiſing the head of the ſerpent, is a key to all the ſucceeding hiſtory of Providence, in reference to individuals or to nations, to the Church

[v] Deut. xxxii. 4. [w] 2 Sam. xxii. 31, 32.

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Church or the world. We ſee the earth peopled, and in a little almoſt entirely ſtript of its inhabitants; cities built, and razed; empires founded, and brought to ruin; all in relation to that kingdom which ſhall never have an end, and that dominion which ſhall not be given to another people. "When the Moſt High divided to the na-"tions their inheritance, when he ſeparated the "ſons of Adam, he ſet the bounds of the people, "according to the number of the children of Iſ-"rael[x]." It was for the ſake of his Church, and as her Redeemer and Holy One, that he "ſent to "Babylon, and brought down all their nobles[y]." When he warns her not to be "afraid of the Aſ-"ſyrian," her intereſt in the Meſſiah is pointed out as her ſecurity and conſolation; "It ſhall "come to paſs in that day, that his burden ſhall "be taken away from off thy ſhoulder, and his "yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke ſhall be "deſtroyed *becauſe of the anointing*[z]."

It was doubtleſs with a deſign to impreſs the Iſraelites with a ſenſe of the unity, both of his eſſence, and of his love to the Church, that God ſo frequently deſigned himſelf from the relation which he bore to their fathers. He was pleaſed to take ſuch names in ſucceſſion; as if he meant to inform them, that notwithſtanding the lapſe of time, and the change of perſons, he is ſtill the ſame. When he appeared to Moſes, and gave him a commiſſion to proclaim liberation to his captives in Egypt, he commanded him to deliver this

x Deut. xxxii. 8. y Iſa. xliii. 14. z Iſa. x. 27.

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this meſſage; "JEHOVAH, the God of your fa-
"thers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac,
"and the God of Jacob, hath ſent me unto you:
"this is my name for ever, and my memorial un-
"to all generations[a]." As he uſes this language in the preſent time, eſpecially in the ſtricteſt connexion with that wonderful name, I AM THAT I AM; while it proves the unchangeableneſs of his love to theſe patriarchs, as ſtill exiſting in a ſeparate ſtate, it proclaims the ſame unchangeable love to all their ſpiritual ſeed.

The Redeemer of his Church indeed aſſumed various deſignations of the ſame kind, according to her ſituation, and the progreſs of his work. When by an awful diſplay of his juſtice he had ſeparated the family of Noah from all the other inhabitants of the earth, it appeared proper to his infinite wiſdom to ſeparate one branch of this family from the reſt. He therefore took the character of "JEHOVAH the God of Shem[b];" as the promiſe was to run in the line of his poſterity. After being known by this character for ſeveral generations, when all the poſterity of Shem were more or leſs corrupted, he ſeparated one individual, not merely from the other families of this race, but from his father's family, as his true worſhipper, and the anceſtor of that illuſtrious perſonage in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. He revealed himſelf as "the God of "Abraham." Only one of all the ſons of Abraham being the child of promiſe; he alſo called himſelf

[a] Exod. iii. 15. [b] Gen. ix. 26.

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himſelf "the God of Iſaac:" and with theſe two he conjoined the name of Jacob, as he loved him, while his brother Eſau was rejected. In the hiſtory of Jacob, we have a ſtriking inſtance of his zeal for preſerving the doctrine of the divine unity. When Laban and he entered into a covenant, Laban uſed this form of ſwearing; "The "God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the "God of their Father, judge betwixt us." But "Jacob ſware by the fear of his father Iſaac [c]," that is, by the object of his fear. Jacob would not ſwear in the terms uſed by Laban. For he mentioned "the God of Abraham," as at the ſame time the God of Nahor, and of their father Terah. Now, we are told that Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, "ſerved "other gods, on the other ſide of the flood," or great river Euphrates [d]. Laban ſware by "the "God of Abraham," before he was ſeparated from his father's houſe: Jacob would ſwear only by that God of Abraham, who was worſhipped by his immediate father Iſaac, who had called Abraham from idolatry, and given him the promiſe of ſalvation in the ſeed of Iſaac *.

c Gen. xxxi. 53. d Joſh. xxiv. 2.

* Here the remarks of a very ingenious writer merit our attention. Speaking of the pretenſions made by other nations, allied to the Iſraelites, to the promiſe of the Meſſiah, he ſays: "It is theſe jealouſies, and theſe "pretenſions,—that gave riſe to the cuſtom of calling God, the God of "Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob: for though he might "as well have been called the God of Adam, the God of Enoch, and the "God of Noah, foraſmuch as all theſe patriarchs were alſo depoſitaries of "the promiſe of the Meſſiah: yet it is probable that God was called ſo, be-

"cauſe

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When God had ſeparated a peculiar people for himſelf, to expreſs the nearneſs of their relation, the pleaſure he had in them, eſpecially as emblems of his ſpiritual ſeed, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf from all falſe gods, he took the name of "the "God of Iſrael." He did not borrow a new deſignation from any individual among them: for he viewed Iſrael, in their collective capacity, as "his ſon, his firſt-born." He ſtill delighted, however, in recogniſing his relation to their pious progenitors; and in aſſuring them, that he would "perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to "Abraham, which he had ſworn from the days of "old [e]."

Thus was God pleaſed to link one revelation with another; that he might, in the moſt expreſſive manner, teach his people the importance of the doctrine of the divine unity, and ſhew them the neceſſity of being on their guard againſt impoſture; while he at the ſame time gave them the moſt ſatisfying evidence that they had nothing of this kind to fear, when addreſſed by the God of their fathers. Such care did he manifeſt in this reſpect, that, in different inſtances, he in this manner connected the diſtinct revelations that he

"cauſe of the particular promiſes that had been made to Abraham, ſe-"condly to Iſaac, and laſtly to Jacob, and in oppoſition to the pretenſions "of ſome people near neighbours to the Iſraelites, and jealous of their "hopes: The God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the Ammonites and "Moabites, Lot's poſterity, pretended; the God of *Iſaac*, and not of *Iſh-"mael*, as the Iſhmaelites pretended; the God of *Jacob*, and not of *Eſau*, "as the Edomites, who were the offspring of Eſau, pretended." Allix's Reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures, Vol. i. p. 80.

[e] Mic. vii. 20.

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he made to the ſame perſons. When he appeared to Abram in the plain of Mamre, he reminded him that, although his ſituation was changed, he was ſtill under the protection of the ſame God. He ſaid to him; "I am JEHOVAH that *brought* "*thee out of Ur of the Chaldees*, to give thee this "land, to inherit it[f]." When he commanded Jacob to leave Meſopotamia, and return to his own kindred; that he might have no doubt as to the certainty of the call, and that he might know that it was the ſame God who had "fed him all "his life long," and that his power was the ſame in all places, and at all times, he referred him to what had taken place many years before, ſaying; "I am the *God of Bethel*, where thou anointedſt "the pillar, and where thou vowedſt a vow unto "me[g]." Afterwards, he made himſelf known to Jacob by the ſame peculiar character. He ſaid to him; "Ariſe, go up to Bethel,—and make "there an altar *to God that appeared unto thee*, "*when thou fleddeſt* from the face of Eſau thy "brother[h]."

When the glorious conſequences of the aſcenſion of Chriſt are foretold, it is in this language; "The princes of the people are gathered toge-"ther, even the people of the God of Abraham[i]." In conformity to this, and to illuſtrate the unity of the object of worſhip, and the unity of his work for the redemption of the Church, Peter declares to the Jewiſh council; "The God of "Abraham,

f Gen. xv. 7. g Gen. xxxi. 13. h Gen. xxxv. 1.
i Pſal. xlvii. 9.

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" Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God " of our fathers, hath glorified his ſon Jeſus [k]."

He had been known, for a long ſucceſſion of ages, as " the God of Iſrael," and as his Redeemer. He had claimed this character, as atteſted by many temporal and typical redemptions; and eſpecially as JEHOVAH, " who brought up the chil- " dren of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt;" and afterwards, in reference to the deliverance from Babylon, as he " who led the ſeed of the houſe " of Iſrael out of the north country [l]." In the language of prophecy, he had ſaid to his own Son, as the glorious Antitype, and as the Repreſentative of that ſpiritual Iſrael whom he had choſen to be his peculiar treaſure; " Thou art my ſer- " vant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified [m]." Now although, in the New Teſtament, he is called " the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Ja- " cob," and alſo " the God of Iſrael [n]," in order to illuſtrate his unity both of eſſence and of operation; yet, the ſpiritual redemption being accompliſhed, he is eſpecially deſigned in relation to this. The God, and the Father, of Iſrael eſpecially delights to be known as " the God and Fa- " ther of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," that true Iſrael in whom he hath been ſo ſignally glorified.

VIII. That JEHOVAH is the only true God, hath appeared from a variety of proofs, recorded in Scripture-hiſtory, of his power in *changing* the *heart*. He, even he only " knoweth the hearts " of

k Acts iii. 13. l Jer. xxiii. 7, 8. m Iſa. xlix. 3. n Luke i. 68.

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"of all the children of men [o];" and he only can change them. In the former reſpect he diſplays his infinite wiſdom; in the latter, his almighty power; in both, he appears to be God alone. Hence, when he promiſes a revival to his Church, by the gracious effuſion of his Spirit, he declares that this ſhould be to her an indubitable evidence of his excluſive right to the honours of deity: "Ye ſhall know that I am JEHOVAH, when I have "opened your graves, O my people, and brought "you up out of your graves, and ſhall put my "Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live [p]." Both by the anſwer of prayer, and by the power of divine grace on his heart, Manaſſeh "knew that JEHO-"VAH he was God [q]."

So great is the natural obduracy of the heart, that no power can ſubdue it but that which is divine. Hence it is deſcribed as a heart of ſtone; and the breaking of it is claimed by God as his prerogative: "Is not my word like as a fire, "and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in "pieces [r]?" Such is its deceitfulneſs, that God only can ſo know the diſeaſe as to apply an effectual remedy. He alone can diſcover it to the ſinner, becauſe he alone is perfectly acquainted with it. Therefore he ſays, "The heart is de-"ceitful above all things;—who can know it? I "JEHOVAH ſearch the heart, and try the reins [s]." This work alſo declares, that it is he only "who "formed the ſpirit of man within him." For as

o 1 Kings viii. 39. p Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14. q 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.
r Jer. xxiii. 29. s Chap. xvii. 9, 10.

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the renovation of the heart is called a creation, who can thus renew the heart, but he who created it at first? When the Pſalmiſt refers to the wonderful works of JEHOVAH in proof of his excluſive deity, he particularly ſpecifies this work of mercy. "Among the gods there is none like "unto thee, O JEHOVAH, neither are there any "works like unto thy works.—Thou art great, "and doſt wondrous things: thou art God alone. "—For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou "haſt delivered my ſoul from the loweſt hell[t]."

Is the God whom we profeſs to adore, the only living and true God? Let us flee from idolatry in every form. While we deteſt the worſhip of falſe gods, or of ſaints and angels who are our fellow-ſervants; let us beware of the love of the world. For covetouſneſs is idolatry. He, who is God alone, hath a rightful claim to our whole hearts. This claim he makes on us, on the very ground of his abſolute unity: "Hear, O Iſrael, JEHOVAH "our God is one JEHOVAH. And thou ſhalt love "JEHOVAH thy God with all thine heart, and "with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might[u]." Let us ſay unto him in ſincerity, "Whom have "I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon "earth that I deſire beſides thee." From him alone let us look for ſalvation. He only who is God, can be a Saviour. To give the name to any other, is blaſphemy. Our God is equally jealous of his honour in this reſpect, as in that of his eſſential unity. "I," ſaith he, "even I am JEHO-

"VAH,

t Pſal. lxxxvi. 8. 10. 13. u Deut. vi. 4, 5.

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"VAH, and beſides me there is no Saviour."—"There is no God elſe beſides me, a juſt God "and a Saviour, there is none beſides me. Look "unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the "earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe [v]."

SECTION II.

The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity,—Proved from the Hiſtory of Creation;—of the Fall;—of the Confuſion of Tongues;—of Redemption.

WE have ſeen, that the preſervation of the doctrine of the divine unity, was one ſpecial end of the revelation given to the Iſraelites; and that even the hiſtory contained in the ſacred volume was meant to be a hedge around this important doctrine. But while the all-wiſe God manifeſted ſuch care with reſpect to the unity of his eſſence, he would not conceal from his Church the manner of his ſubſiſtence in three diſtinct perſons. This doctrine, indeed, like many others of the greateſt moment, was more obſcurely revealed before the coming of the Meſſiah. To ſo groſs and carnal a people was God pleaſed to reveal himſelf, and in a period of ſuch general polytheiſm, that it appeared proper to his infinite wiſdom, to unfold this myſtery more ſparingly.

[v] Iſa. xliii. 11.; xlv. 21, 22.

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The doctrines of eſſential unity and plurality of perſons, are ſo tempered together in the language of inſpiration, that while the Church could have no excuſe for turning aſide to polytheiſm, ſhe could with as little reaſon conclude that her God ſubſiſted in a ſingle perſon. It is not merely in the doctrines, precepts or promiſes, that we are to ſearch for this myſtery of a plurality in unity. It ſo frequently beams forth, even in the hiſtoric page, that we are under a neceſſity of believing, that it was not one of the leaſt deſigns that God had in view, in favouring the Church with the hiſtorical parts of Scripture, more fully to reveal this doctrine, as well as to preſerve it uncorrupted.

The doctrine of a plurality, appears in the very firſt words of inſpiration. God would not record the hiſtory of *creation*, without informing the Church, that the character of Creator was by no means to be confined to one perſon. It has often been obſerved, that this is taught in the words rendered *God created*, where we have a noun in the plural, joined with a verb in the ſingular number, plainly expreſſing a plurality in unity. That this is the genuine ſenſe of the paſſage, appears from the work aſcribed, in the next verſe, to the Spirit of God, who is ſaid to have "moved "on the face of the waters." By modern Jews, whom ſome Chriſtians have followed, this expreſſion has been rendered, "a wind of God," or "a mighty wind." But the firmament, or expanſe, was not created till the ſecond day. This includes

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includes the atmoſphere which ſurrounds our earth: for the fowl is ſaid to "fly above the earth "in the open firmament of heaven [v]." Now, it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that there could be a mighty wind, or any wind at all, before the exiſtence of an atmoſphere.

If we turn to the goſpel-hiſtory, we find a third perſon mentioned as engaged in the work of creation. "All things were made by" that Word, who "in the beginning exiſted with God [w]."

This plurality appears ſtill more expreſsly, when the ſacred hiſtorian gives an account of the creation of man: "And God ſaid, Let *us* make man "in *our* image, after *our* likeneſs." But it is a plurality in unity: "So God created man in *his* "own image [x]." It has been juſtly obſerved, that to this the language of Elihu, and of the royal Preacher, agrees: "None ſaith, Where is "God my *Makers* [y];" and, "Remember now thy "*Creators* [z]." Nothing can be more abſurd than the various attempts which have been made to ſhew, that this language may be otherwiſe underſtood. God could never ſpeak in this manner to angels, or to any ſecond cauſes. For to whomſoever theſe words were addreſſed, they muſt have been co-operators with God in this divine work. They muſt have aſſiſted him in making man. Philo the Jew expreſsly ſays, that theſe words, *Let us make*, declare a plurality [a]. That the Jewiſh writers in general view this language as including

v Gen. i. 20. w John i. 1.—3. x Gen. i. 26, 27. y Job xxxv. 10.
z Eccleſ. xii. 1. a De Confuſ. Ling. p. 270.

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including a myſtery, not to be made known to the vulgar, and indeed ſtudiouſly concealed by them from their abhorrence of Chriſtianity, has been elſewhere demonſtrated [b]. It is therefore unneceſſary to enlarge here. I ſhall only add, that the modern Jews are ſo fully convinced that the doctrine of a plurality is contained in theſe words, as to wiſh to alter the reading. Inſtead of *Let us make man*, they incline to read, *Let man be made;* although the Samaritan text, the Septuagint, the Talmudiſts, and all their tranſlations, whether ancient or modern, expreſs the language in the ſame manner with our verſion.

The ſame important doctrine is introduced in the hiſtory of the *Fall*. That three-one God, who ſaid, "Let us make man after our image," in the ſame character laments the loſs of this image. "JEHOVAH God ſaid, Behold, the man is become "as one of us;" or, as ſome read the paſſage, "Behold the man, who was as one of us [c]!" Here Philo obſerves; "Theſe words, *as one of us*, "are not put for one, but for more than one [d]." The learned Allix has remarked, that the ancient Jewiſh writers maintain, that God "ſpeaks not "this to the angels, who had no common likeneſs "to the unity or eſſence of God, but to Him who "was the celeſtial Adam, who is one with God [e]." To whom this character applies, we learn from the Targum of Jonathan on the place, who here ſpeaks of "the only begotten in heaven."

This

b See Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, &c. vol. i. 5.—8.
c Geſ. iii. 22. d De Confuſ. ubi ſup.
e Judgment of the Jewiſh Church, p. 42.

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This doctrine is alſo taught in the hiſtory of the *Confuſion* of *Tongues*. "JEHOVAH ſaid,—Go "to, let us go down, and there confound their "language [f]." Here the Jews repeat their contemptible ſubterfuge, that God addreſſes his "houſe of judgment," that is, created angels. For it is an eſtabliſhed doctrine with them, that "God does nothing without previouſly conſulting "with his family above [g]." But it has juſtly been obſerved, that theſe words, if ſpoken to angels, would imply that God were one of them, or that he deſcended in the ſame manner with them, by a real change of place. Beſides, in a moment to change one language into many, and to infuſe theſe into the minds of men, who were utter ſtrangers to them before, ſo that they ſhould entirely forget their former modes of ſpeech, is a work that far ſurpaſſes the power of angels, and can be accompliſhed by no being but that God, with whom to will and to do is the ſame [h].

It muſt be evident to every one, who reads the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament with any degree of attention, that an *Angel* is often introduced as ſpeaking the language, performing the works, and accepting the worſhip, which excluſively belong to the Supreme Being. In other words, one, who is undoubtedly a divine perſon, often appears in a delegated character. Now, while it was the will of God in this manner conſtantly to remind his Church of the economy of redemption, he at the

f Gen. xi. 7. g Maimonides, More Nevochim, P. ii. c. 6.
h Vid. Bocharti Phaleg. lib. i. c. 15.

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the ſame time taught her a diſtinction of perſons in the divine eſſence. It was this Angel who appeared to Abraham on different occaſions, to Hagar, to Jacob, to Moſes, to Joſhua, to the Iſraelites at Bochim, to Gideon, to Manoah and his wife. But I enter not into a particular conſideration of theſe appearances, having endeavoured to illuſtrate the character of this divine Meſſenger in another place [i]. There it has alſo been proved, that the law was given to the Iſraelites at Mount Sinai, by the ſecond perſon of the adorable Trinity in the character of the Angel of JEHOVAH [k]. It deſerves particular attention, that at the very time that the God of Iſrael gave his people a law, by which they were to be diſtinguiſhed from all the idolatrous nations around, one ſpecial deſign of which was to preſerve the doctrine of the divine unity;—at the very time that he pronounced that leading precept, "Thou ſhalt have no "other gods before me;" he, according to the Sacred Hiſtory viewed in its connexion, ſuſtained the character of an Angel, and was pleaſed to communicate the knowledge of this fact to his people. How can theſe apparent contradictions be reconciled, but by admitting that it was the will of God to reveal himſelf to his Church, as at the ſame time poſſeſſing eſſential unity and perſonal plurality?

The more ancient Jewiſh writers declare, that two perſons were engaged in promulgating the law.

i Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, vol. i. p. 99.—117.

k Ibid. p. 268.—274. 280.—283. 525.

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law. They ſay; "The two firſt precepts were "ſpoken by the Supreme Spirit, but he ſpoke all "the reſt by his Glory, who is called *El Shaddai*, "known to the fathers; by whom the prophets "foretold future events; who is called *Jah*; in "whom the Name of God is; the Beloved of "God who dwelt in the temple; and the Mouth "of the LORD; and the Face of the LORD; and "the Rock; and that Goodneſs which Moſes ſaw, "when he could not ſee God[1]." Elſewhere they call him "the *Schechinah*, by whom we draw "near to God, and preſent our ſupplications to "him; who is that Angel in whom the name of "God is, who is himſelf called God and JEHO-"VAH." The change of perſon, in the promulgation of the law, aſſerted by theſe writers, is evidently a mere fancy. But their language deſerves attention; as it ſhews how fully they were convinced of the doctrine of a plurality in unity, when they introduced it in this manner.

It has been univerſally admitted by the friends of revelation, that the great end which God hath in view in the work of *Redemption*, is the diſplay of his own adorable perfections. But there is doubtleſs another, although leſs attended to, nowiſe incompatible with this, nay, itſelf an eminent branch of the ſupreme end. This is the manifeſtation of the myſtery of the Trinity, and of the mode of ſubſiſtence peculiar to each perſon in the divine eſſence. This muſt undoubtedly be viewed as included in the one great deſign of the all-wiſe

[1] Bechai, fol. 88. col. 3. 4. ap. Wits. Oecon. Fœd. lib. iv. c. 4.

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all-wise God, in our redemption; and it is evident that he hath still kept it in eye, in the revelation given to the Church, and especially in the history of that work, as it is recorded in the gospels. We may trace the doctrine of a Trinity in the accounts given of the old creation; but it appears with far superior evidence in the history of the new. This corresponds to the superior greatness of the work, and to the brighter and more extensive display of divine perfection.

Such was the state of the Church, as to admit of a more full manifestation of this mystery. It was more obscurely revealed to the patriarchs, and under the Mosaic economy. This was analogous to the general character of the revelation then made; as well as to the state of the Church, yet in her infancy, and exposed to constant temptations to polytheism, from the situation of all the surrounding nations. But "when the fullness of "the time was come," that the gospel should be preached to every creature, and the kingdom of Satan fall as lightning from heaven, in the overthrow of heathen darkness; there were no such impediments to the more clear revelation of this mysterious doctrine. The rest of the divine conduct indeed rendered this necessary. God had now "sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made "under the law, to redeem them that were under "the law." The ends of this mission could not be accomplished, without a full revelation of the character of this illustrious Messenger. He could not otherwise receive that homage from the Church,

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Church, which he merited as her Redeemer, and which was neceſſary, in order to her ſalvation. Now, his character, as eſſentially the Son of God, and at the ſame time a divine Meſſenger, could not be properly unfolded, without a declaration both of the paternity of the Firſt Perſon, and of that wonderful diſpenſation according to which the Second, although equal in power and glory, voluntarily "emptied himſelf." Nor could the unity of the work of redemption, as pervading all the diſpenſations given to the Church, and the beautiful harmony of the law and the goſpel, be otherwiſe diſplayed. Without a full revelation of this myſtery, how could it have been known that he who appeared in the end of ages as ſent of God, was the very ſame perſon who had formerly led the Church, as the Angel of his face; that He who now brought ſpiritual redemption to his folk, was no other than that Angel-Redeemer who had already ſo frequently delivered them from temporal calamities?

If this myſtery be unknown or diſbelieved, there can be no faith in Chriſt as the Mediator between God and men. For he who believes not that the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, as to identity of eſſence, while at the ſame time there is a diſtinction of perſons, denies the voluntary ſubjection of the Son to the Father in the eternal covenant, and thus the whole foundation of his merit and of our ſalvation. In relation to the work of our redemption, and in the hiſtory given of it, are revealed various internal actings

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actings of the divine perſons towards each other, as well as thoſe of an external nature. The Father appoints, gives, ſends, prepares a human nature for his Son: the Son undertakes, gives himſelf, comes, aſſumes this nature.

From the hiſtory given of the conception of Chriſt, we find that three divine perſons were engaged in the creation of this "new thing in the "earth." The Father appears in the character of "the Higheſt;" the Third Perſon, as "the "Holy Ghoſt," and "the Power of the Higheſt;" and the Second, as "the Son of God [m]." When this wonderful Perſon, the incarnate Word, was to be manifeſted to Iſrael at his baptiſm, each divine Perſon concurred in the work. The Father teſtified his preſence and approbation by a voice from the excellent glory, announcing Jeſus as his beloved Son; and the Holy Ghoſt deſcended like a dove, and reſted on him [n]. The hiſtory of his death, viewed in its connexion, affords a proof of a ſimilar kind. As "it pleaſed JEHOVAH," in the perſon of the Father, ſuſtaining the character of Judge, to bruiſe the Son as our Surety; and as he, having power over his own life, commended his ſpirit into the hands of his Father, thus preſenting unto him a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour; he did ſo "through the Eternal Spirit." The ſame thing appears from the reſurrection of Jeſus. He was "powerfully declared to be the "Son of God in his reſurrection from the dead [o];" for he had "power to take again" that life which no

m Luke i. 35. n Mat. iii. 16, 17. o Rom. i. 4.

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no one could take from him. This work is frequently aſcribed to God, where the term evidently denotes the Firſt Perſon. "God hath raiſed "up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſe- "cond pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I "begotten thee [p]." As he was "put to death in "the fleſh, he was quickened by the Spirit," by that Spirit of holineſs, "by which alſo he went "and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon [q]." Nor is this leſs evident from the account given of the effuſion of the Spirit. This is undoubtedly a divine work; and it is deſcribed as belonging to each adorable Perſon. Jeſus had foretold that the Comforter ſhould come, that himſelf ſhould ſend him [r], and that he ſhould at the ſame time be ſent by the Father [s]. Accordingly, from the account given of this wonderful event by the apoſtle Peter, which is left on record for the inſtruction of the Church, we find that each divine Perſon was engaged in accompliſhing it: "Jeſus having re- "ceived of the Father the promiſe of the Holy "Ghoſt, hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee "and hear [t]."

It is undeniable, that one ſpecial end, which Chriſt had in view in his miraculous works, was to confirm his doctrine with reſpect to his equality with the Father. When he gave thanks at the tomb of Lazarus, before raiſing him from the dead, it was becauſe of the people who ſtood by, that they might believe that the Father had

p Acts xiii. 33. q 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. r John xvi. 7
s Chap. xiv. 26. t Acts ii. 33.

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ſent him; and ſent him as a Meſſenger inveſted with divine power, becauſe eſſentially poſſeſſing divine perfection. For he had previouſly ſaid to his diſciples: "This ſickneſs is not unto death, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God "might be glorified thereby;" and taught Martha, that if ſhe "would believe, ſhe would ſee the "glory of God," in ſeeing the manifeſtation of that power which eſſentially belonged to himſelf, as "the Reſurrection and the Life [u]." When he cured the man ſick of the palſy, it was in order to prove that he had "power on earth to forgive "ſin;" while he admitted the principle held by the ſcribes, that no one could forgive ſins but God only [v]. On different occaſions he refers to his miraculous works, as irrefragable evidences of his having the ſame eſſence with the Father; and of the mutual inexiſtence, as ſome have expreſſed it, of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Father, in reſpect of this eſſential unity, while there is at the ſame time a real diſtinction of perſons. When his enemies accuſed him of blaſphemy, becauſe he ſaid, "I am the Son of God," "making himſelf God;" he replied, "If I do "not the works of my Father, believe me not. "But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe "the works; that ye may know and believe that "the Father is in me, and I in him [w]." To Philip, when deſiring to ſee the Father, he ſaid, "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the "Father

u John xi. 4. 25. 40. 42. comp. v Mark ii. 7. 10.
w John x. 33-36.—38.

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"Father in me; or elſe believe me for the very "work's ſake [x]." The Evangeliſt John, when referring to the ſigns recorded in the preceding hiſtory, ſubjoins this declaration; "Theſe are writ-"ten, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Son "of God [y]." That he appropriates this character to Jeſus, as expreſſive of ſupreme deity, is evident from the uniform tenor of the goſpel which bears his name [z].

The doctrine of the Trinity is peculiarly elucidated by the hiſtory of redemption; as it does not merely exhibit all the adorable Perſons as engaged in this work, but aſcribes a peculiar operation to each Perſon. The contrivance of our redemption is aſcribed to the Father; the purchaſe of it to the Son; and the effectual application of this purchaſed redemption to the Holy Spirit. The Father ſends his Son as our Surety; the Son cheerfully comes in this character; and the Holy Spirit is ſent by both. The purpoſe of election is more immediately aſcribed to the Father; the objects of his love are all choſen in Chriſt; and they, who were thus choſen from eternity, are in time choſen out of the world, and ſeparated for himſelf, by the renewing and ſanctifying work of the Spirit.

Nor is this all. The peculiar operation of each Perſon, in the work of our ſalvation, is perfectly analogous to the order of ſubſiſtence in the Holy Trinity; and thus beautifully illuſtrates the

x John xiv. 11. y John xx. 31. z See, for a farther illuſtration of this ſubject, Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, &c. Book ii. chap. 6. *Of the Evidence of our Saviour's Divinity, from his Miracles.*

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mutual relations of the divine Perſons. All the external works of God, indeed, are common to each Perſon; as the divine nature is the ſame indiviſible principle of operation. Yet theſe works are diſtinctly aſcribed to the three Perſons, becauſe each Perſon operates according to the order of ſubſiſtence. In the old creation, the Father called all things into being, by his co-eſſential Word, communicating life immediately by the Spirit, as exerciſing a generating power on the unformed maſs. When God created man, the Firſt Perſon formed him by the Second, as his eſſential Image, giving him life, both natural and moral, by the Third as "the Spirit of life[a]." Yet this implies no inferiority, or mere inſtrumentality, in any of the adorable Perſons; but only the moſt perfect order and harmony. The caſe is the ſame in the new creation. It ſeems moſt conſiſtent with divine wiſdom, that he who is firſt in the order of ſubſiſtence ſhould rather *ſend* than be *ſent;* that the Son, who is "the "image of the inviſible God," ſhould procure the reſtoration of that bleſſed image loſt by ſin; and that he, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, ſhould be ſent by both, to quicken thoſe who are ſpiritually dead. This diſtinct operation indeed, as it correſponds with the order of ſubſiſtence, beautifully harmonizes with the diſtinguiſhing character belonging to each Perſon. He, who is eſſentially the Father, aſſumes the character of paternity, in a federal reſpect, towards thoſe

[a] Gen. i. 27.; ii. 7.

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thoſe who are orphans and aliens. The only-begotten Son of God is ſent forth, made under the law, that they may "receive the adoption of "ſons," and appears as "the firſt-born among "many brethren." The adorable Spirit, "the "breath of JEHOVAH," breathes on the ſlain, that they may live; giving them a new heart and a right ſpirit. He, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, unites the ſinner to both.

Is it "life eternal to know the only true God, "and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent?" Hath no one the Father, who "denieth the Son?" Can no one honour the Father, "who honoureth not "the Son?" Is it the Spirit alone who quickeneth, and who teacheth us to "know the things "that are freely given us of God?" Can no man "ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy "Ghoſt?" Is it through Chriſt that "we have "acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father?" Let us bleſs God for the revelation of the myſtery of a Trinity in unity; and eſpecially becauſe he hath revealed it ſo clearly in the hiſtory of our redemption, in relation to that work in which a peculiar operation belongs to each adorable Perſon, in which the love of a three-one God is ſo wonderfully diſplayed, in which we diſcern ſo bleſſed a harmony, not only of divine perfections, but of divine Perſons! In all our worſhip, let us view God according to this revelation, aſcribing glory to him "who is, and who was, and "who is to come, and to the Seven Spirits which

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" are before his throne, and to Jeſus Chriſt, who " is the faithful witneſs, and the firſt-begotten " from the dead, and the prince of the kings of " the earth." Let us earneſtly deſire communion with this three-one God; with the Father, in his love as the ſpring of our ſalvation; with the Son, in all that grace which he hath purchaſed by his blood; and with the Holy Ghoſt, in the whole extent of his efficacious operation. In order to this, let us preſs after union with Chriſt, that in him we may be united to the Father by that one Spirit who proceeds from both, and who is conferred by both as the Spirit of adoption. Let us cultivate love to the brethren, as members of the ſame myſtical body, deſiring to be " one heart " and one ſoul;" that although many, we may be one, and thus be aſſimilated, in our weak meaſure, to the bleſſed Trinity in reſpect of unity; as Jeſus prays in behalf of his Church;—" That " they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in " me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one " in us.—I in them, and thou in me, that they " may be made perfect in one; and that the " world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and " haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me [b]."

SECT.

b John xvii. 21. 23.

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SECTION III.

Of the Wiſdom of God.—Of his Power.—Of that character, The LORD of Hoſts.

In the ſacred volume, we have an hiſtory of the divine perfections. Theſe are not only declared in a doctrinal way, but alſo hiſtorically delineated. They are not merely exhibited as objects of faith; by their wonderful effects, they become as it were viſible to the very ſenſes of men. Often, in one event, one perfection appears more conſpicuous than others, like an "apple of gold, ſet in pictures of ſilver." In another, different perfections beam forth with diſtinguiſhed luſtre. But whether the diſplay be limited to one, or extended to more, ſuch are the characters of the work as to proclaim a divine agent.

It might be ſhewed, that we have here an hiſtory of the *Wiſdom* of God. This perfection is diſplayed in the work of creation. All things are declared to be "very good [c]," as exactly correſponding to the pattern in the divine mind, and to the end for which they were made. We may therefore juſtly ſay; "O LORD, how manifold "are thy works, in wiſdom haſt thou made them

[c] Gen. i. 31.

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"all [d]." The ſame wiſdom is conſpicuous in the works of Providence. How often hath God "brought to nought the counſel of the wicked;" now, by "making their devices of none effect," although the reſult of the moſt mature deliberation, and diſplaying all the craft of the old ſerpent; then, by turning their very ſchemes of deſtruction on their own heads! Pharaoh ſaid, in the height of his reſentment, and in the inſolence of his pride; "I will purſue, I will overtake, I "will divide the ſpoil; my luſt ſhall be ſatisfied "upon them; I will draw my ſword, my hand "ſhall deſtroy them [e]." But this very purſuit was overruled for his more ſignal overthrow.

The wiſdom of God might be illuſtrated from the conſideration of the means employed for the preſervation of the truth. The great longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs, and of ſome of thoſe who lived after the flood, was evidently deſigned in ſubſerviency to the preſervation of that precious doctrine revealed to the Church, while it was only tranſmitted by tradition. A particular family was afterwards ſeparated for this purpoſe. At length, when idolatry had overrun the world, revelation was committed to writing, and a whole nation were employed as its guardians. As the Sacred Hiſtory exhibits the completion of great part of the prophecies contained in the volume of inſpiration, we have another evidence that its author is "the only wiſe God," who "knoweth the end from the beginning."

Did

d Pſal. civ. 24. e Exod. xv. 9.

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Did we particularly conſider the hiſtory of redemption, we would at every ſtep find reaſon to admire "the manifold wiſdom of God;" as diſplayed in the comprehenſive nature of the firſt revelation of grace, which is a beautiful ſummary of all that hath ſince been communicated to the Church; in its being expreſſed in a free promiſe; in the ſeaſonableneſs of this revelation; in the choice of that divine Perſon, as the immediate Revealer, who was himſelf to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent; in the inſtitution of ſacrifices, as a perpetual and ſenſible teſtimony of the way in which ſin ſhould actually be expiated; in the ſalvation of the family of Noah by an ark, and by means of water, as figurative of the ſalvation of all who believe; in the appointment of a typical prieſthood and royalty, as well as in raiſing up prophets, who were at the ſame time meſſengers employed by the Angel of the covenant, and types of his future appearance in our world; in the whole frame of the Moſaic diſpenſation, as a ſhadow of good things to come; in the gradual increaſe of the light of revelation, as the more perfect day approached, when "the Sun of righteouſneſs" ſhould himſelf "ariſe with healing in his "wings."

How wonderful the diſplay of divine wiſdom, in the conſtitution of the mediatory perſon of Jeſus; in the formation of his body, of the ſame ſubſtance with ours, yet without ſin; in the choice of the time of his appearance, when "the "world by wiſdom knew not God;" in the means employed

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employed for the accompliſhment of the prophecy as to his being born in Bethlehem, and for making it legally known that he was of the lineage of David; in the excitement of a general expectation, among Gentiles as well as Jews, of the appearance of an illuſtrious and extraordinary perſon about this time; in the choice of his forerunner, in reſpect of the tribe of which he ſprung, his immediate parents, the place of his nativity and education, his manner of life, his peculiar miniſtry, his great acceptableneſs to the people, his eminent faithfulneſs and intrepidity, his want of perſonal acquaintance with the Meſſiah, and the occaſion and circumſtances of his teſtimony to him!

Here we might contemplate this perfection as diſplayed in the doctrine which Chriſt taught; in the character of his miracles; in the choice of the time and circumſtances in which many of them were wrought, and in their peculiar ſignificancy as emblems of his ſpiritual work; in the employment of ſo unlikely a mean as his own death, for deſtroying the power of ſin, Satan and death; in his being betrayed by one of his diſciples, the natural conſequence of which muſt have been, that had the traitor known any thing detrimental to the character of his Maſter, he would undoubtedly have publiſhed it for his own vindication; in making the doctrine of the croſs the inſtrument of ſubduing the world to the obedience of faith.—But the nature of this work will not admit of ſo particular a diſcuſſion.

We

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We might alſo take an extenſive view of Divine *Power*. For the ſacred volume contains a ſtriking and an ample hiſtory of this perfection. Its glory illuminates the records of creation. No language can be imagined, that could ſo forcibly expreſs the infinite eaſe with which God effected this work, as that employed by the inſpired hiſtorian. "God ſaid, Let light be, and light was." He "ſpake, and it was done: he commanded, "and it ſtood faſt." His providential government is one continued diſplay of omnipotence. "Day "unto day uttereth ſpeech."

The Sacred Hiſtory, in a great variety of inſtances, illuſtrates the meaning of that name which God ſo frequently uſes,—JEHOVAH SABAOTH, or the LORD OF HOSTS,—a name which peculiarly expreſſes his almighty power and univerſal dominion. Some have ſuppoſed, that Sabaoth is one of the proper names of God. But it is evident, that as the word ſignifies *hoſts* or *armies*, he is called the LORD, or God of hoſts, becauſe the various hoſts of creatures are all the work of his hands, and obey his will. This is juſt an expreſſion of his omnipotence. Hence we find, that the language of the ſeraphim, "Holy, holy, holy is "the LORD of hoſts[f]," is applied to him by the four living creatures, with a change of expreſſion denoting the meaning of the name; "Holy, holy, "holy LORD God Almighty[g]."

His

[f] Iſa. vi. 3. [g] Rev. iv. 8.

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His is "the army of heaven." The different orders of holy *angels* are all his hosts, his "minis-"ters that do his pleasure." He employs them as ministers both of providence and grace, and as instruments either of judgment, or of mercy. By an angel, the vain-glorious Herod is smitten [h], and by an angel the faithful servant of Jesus is delivered [i]. Sometimes one of these heavenly messengers sweeps away embattled hosts with "the "besom of destruction." Thus an angel smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand [k]. At other times, an army of angels is employed as a guard to one man. When the king of Syria sought to make Elisha his prisoner, and sent to Dothan "horses, "and chariots, and a great host," which compassed the city; "behold, the mountain," on which it was built, "was full of horses and chariots of "fire round about Elisha [l]." When the angels of God met Jacob on his way to his father's house, he said, "This is God's host [m]." "Are they not "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to "the heirs of salvation?"

He hath also legions of *devils* at his command, whom he employs, either for the trial of his saints, as in the experience of Job [n]; or for the punishment of his adversaries, as we learn from the account given of his judgments on the Egyptians; "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, "wrath and indignation, and trouble, by sending "evil

h Acts xii. 23. i Acts xii. 7. 11. k 2 Kings xix. 35.
l 2 Kings vi. 15. 17. m Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. n Job i. 12.; ii. 6.

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" evil angels among them [o]." Theſe helliſh hoſts acknowledged Jeſus as their Lord; confeſſing that he had power to torment them, or to ſend them whitherſoever he pleaſed.

Wicked men muſt alſo be numbered among his hoſts. For he " maketh the wrath of man to " praiſe him; the remainder of wrath ſhall he " reſtrain." Hence he calls Nebuchadnezzar his ſervant [p]: and all wicked men are his ſervants in the ſame ſenſe: for he overrules their very wickedneſs for accompliſhing his own purpoſes. " His " ſervants they are to whom they obey:" and although diſobedient to the precept, they, without any intention on their part, as well as without any conſtraint on his, fulfil the purpoſe. For accompliſhing his deſigns of judgment, often he employs them againſt one another. Thus did he teſtify his diſpleaſure with the Midianites [q], and afterwards with the Philiſtines [r], when they ſought the deſtruction of his people. He " ſet every " man's ſword againſt his fellow." Often hath he employed them as his inſtruments in puniſhing a profeſſing people for their iniquities. Sennacherib, notwithſtanding all his boaſting and ſtoutneſs of heart againſt the God of Iſrael, was only his ſword. That God, whom he blaſphemed, had ſent him, although he knew it not, " againſt an " hypocritical nation." He was merely executing a commiſſion, which he could not read; and fulfilling all God's counſel, although he viewed it as

o Pſal. lxxviii. 49. p Jer. xxvii. 6. q Judg. vii. 22.
r 1 Sam. xiv. 20.

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as wholly his own [s]. Often alſo have the wicked been employed as inſtruments of deliverance to the Church. The kings of the Medes invaded Chaldea, with no other deſign than to gratify their ambition or revenge. But it was the purpoſe of the Moſt High to break in pieces the proud empire of Babylon, that his captives might be delivered. He therefore deſcribes the plan, preparations, warlike operations and ſucceſs, as proceeding wholly from himſelf: and, to expreſs the abſolute certainty of the event, although at the diſtance of ſome centuries, he employs ſuch language as if he rather declared what was paſt, than foretold what was future. He appears as a ſovereign leader, iſſuing forth his orders to his vaſſals, which they muſt neceſſarily execute; nay, as an inviſible, but all-powerful agent, influencing all their counſels. "Make bright the arrows; "gather the ſhields: the LORD hath raiſed up "the ſpirit of the kings of the Medes: for his "device is againſt Babylon, to deſtroy it; be- "cauſe it is the vengeance of the LORD, the ven- "geance of his temple.—The LORD of Hoſts hath "ſworn by himſelf, ſaying, Surely I will fill thee "with men as with caterpillars.—Set ye up a "ſtandard in the land, blow the trumpet among "the nations, prepare the nations againſt her: "call together againſt her the kingdoms of Ara- "rat, Minni and Aſhchenaz, appoint a captain "againſt her, cauſe the horſes to come up as the "rough caterpillars. Prepare againſt her the na- "tions

[s] Iſa. x. 5.—7.

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" tions with the kings of the Medes, the captains " thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the " land of his dominion [t]." Obſerve how he deſcribes the cruel Medes and Perſians, and the other heathen nations whom he was pleaſed to employ in this work:—" I have commanded my ſanctified " ones, I have alſo called my mighty ones for " mine anger, even them that rejoice in my high- " neſs. The noiſe of a multitude in the moun- " tain, like as of a great people: a tumultuous " noiſe of the kingdoms of nations gathered toge- " ther: the LORD of *hoſts* muſtereth the *hoſts* of " the battle. They come from a far country, " even the LORD and the weapons of his indig- " nation to deſtroy the whole land [u]."

His *own people* may juſtly be reckoned among his hoſts. The typical Iſraelites are denominated " the hoſts of JEHOVAH [w]." This name eſpecially reſpects the Church under the New Teſtament, conſiſting of converts belonging to every kindred; and therefore called " the goodly heritage of the " hoſts of nations [x]." The Church appears " ter- " rible as an army with banners." All her genuine members have been " volunteers in the " day of his power." They have enliſted under his banner. He employs them in his wars. He teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight. He manages them in a different manner from that in which he exerciſes his power over the wicked. He works in them, not in oppoſition to their own intentions, but according to the habitual

t Jer. li. 11. 14. 27. 28. u Iſa. xiii. 3.—5. w Exod. xii. 41.
x Jer. iii. 19.

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bitual inclinations of their hearts, as renewed by his grace. They obey his will on earth, in reſemblance of the holy army above. Like the angels of bliſs, they in their inferior degree are "his hoſts, his miniſters, that do his pleaſure." It is therefore their daily prayer; "Thy will be "done on earth, as it is in heaven." They have "a leader and commander," who conducts them to certain victory. They "overcome Satan, "through the blood of the Lamb, and the word "of their teſtimony." They alſo overcome the world. And, what is more than either; they are conquerors over themſelves. Employing them as his hoſts, he brings glory to his name by the warfare itſelf, and by its happy termination.

This character is in a peculiar ſenſe conferred on his ſervants in the miniſtry. When the Levites were admitted into the ſervice of God, they were ſaid to "enter into the hoſt," and to "war "the warfare [y]." Hence this very language is adopted by the apoſtle Paul, when addreſſing Timothy [z]: and the miniſters of the New Teſtament, in declaring the glad-tidings of ſalvation, are deſcribed as a great hoſt or army: "JEHO-"VAH gave the word: Great was the army of "thoſe that publiſhed it [a]."

The ſame deſignation is given to the *heavenly bodies*. Hence are they ſo often called "the hoſt "of heaven [b];" not merely as ſignifying their number, but their order, beauty, and conſtant obedience

y Num. iv. 3. 23.
a Pſal. lxviii. 11.
z 1 Tim. i. 18.; 2 Tim. ii. 3. 4.
b Deut. iv. 19.; Iſa. xxxiv. 4.

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dience to the divine command. It deſerves our attention, that as not only the heathen worſhipped the heavenly bodies, but the Iſraelites diſcovered a ſtrong attachment to this ſpecies of idolatry, God, in revealing himſelf to his Church, often aſſerts his abſolute dominion over this hoſt, and alſo occaſionally declares the foundation of this dominion. He announces himſelf as their Lord, becauſe they are all the work of his hands: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath "created theſe, that bringeth out their hoſt by "number: he calleth them all by names by the "greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in "power; not one faileth.—I, even my hands have "ſtretched out the heavens, and all their hoſt have "I commanded [b]." He hath made the "lights "in the firmament of heaven,—for ſeaſons [c]:" and as he is pleaſed to diſpenſe their influences, he either bleſſes the inhabitants of the earth with abundance, or puniſhes them with want; he preſerves them in health, or viſits them with ſickneſs. Hence he connects this name with a declaration of his dominion over the hoſt of heaven, in relation to the earth: "Thus ſaith the LORD, "which giveth the ſun for a light by day, and "the ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for "a light by night, which divideth the ſea when "the waves thereof roar; The LORD of Hoſts is "his name [d]." He hath at times given more aſtoniſhing diſplays of this dominion. "The ſun "ſtood ſtill, and the moon ſtayed, until the peo-

b Iſa. xl. 26.; xlv. 12. c Gen. i. 14. d Jer. xxxi. 35.

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" ple had avenged themſelves on their enemies ; " —for JEHOVAH fought for Iſrael [e]." Deborah, it is probable, in her ſong of triumph, alludes to ſome extraordinary circumſtances not recorded in the hiſtory of the defeat of Jabin's hoſt : " They " fought from heaven ; the ſtars in their courſes " fought againſt Siſera [f]."

The *elements* are alſo his hoſts. " Fire and " hail, ſnow and vapour, ſtormy wind fulfil his " word [g]." He ſwept away an ungodly world with a deluge of water. He deſtroyed the Philiſtines with thunder [h] ; and ſent fire from heaven on the meſſengers of the king of Iſrael, who came to take the prophet Elijah [i]. He made the earth to open and ſwallow up the rebellious company of Korah. When the haughty Pharaoh refuſed to acknowledge and obey the God of heaven and earth, he armed all the elements in his quarrel. He " ſent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along " upon the ground [k]." He turned their water into blood. That very river, on which Egypt depends for the means of life, became an inſtrument of death [l]. The earth roſe in arms againſt its guilty inhabitants. Every particle of duſt was furniſhed with a ſting, and cauſed at once pain and ſelf-abhorrence [m]. The atmoſphere became too groſs a medium for tranſmitting the light of heaven [n]. That air, which formerly ſupported life, was found to be merely a vehicle for the peſtilence.

e Joſh. x. 13, 14. f Judg. v. 20. g Pſa. cxlviii. 8. h 1 Sam. vii. 10. i 2 Kings i. 12. k Exod. ix. 23. l Exod. vii. 19.—21. m Exod. viii. 16, 17. n Exod. x. 21.—23.

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tilence [o]. At length God "did blow with his "wind;" and Pharaoh, with all his hoſt, ſunk as lead in the mighty waters.

All the *irrational* creatures are his hoſts. "Beaſts and all cattle, creeping things and flying "fowl,—praiſe the name of the LORD." To puniſh the idolatry of the mingled nations, which the king of Aſſyria ſettled in the land of Iſrael, "JEHOVAH ſent lions among them [p]." Bears were the inſtruments of his vengeance on the children, who mocked his ſervant Eliſha [q]. To the rebellious prophet, the belly of a great fiſh is provided, as at the ſame time a priſon and a place of preſervation. He puniſhed the murmuring of the Iſraelites, by ſending fiery ſerpents to deſtroy them [r]. At his command, ſuch legions of frogs aſſaulted the Egyptians, that the combined power of Egypt was inſufficient to vanquiſh them [s]. Often hath he poured contempt on the power and on the pride of man, by making the meaneſt or the minuteſt creatures the meſſengers of deſtruction. The *god* Herod is eaten by worms; as if the true God would, by his end, remind him of the meanneſs of his origin, and of the contemptible impotence of that divinity aſcribed to him by his minions [t]. When he would puniſh the oppreſſors of his people, "he ſpake, and there came divers ſorts "of flies, and lice in all their coaſts.—He ſpake, "and the locuſts came, and caterpillers, and that "without number; and did eat up all the herbs

o Exod. ix. 15.; Pſal. lxxviii. 50.
p 2 Kings xvii. 25.
q 2 Kings ii. 24.
r Numb. xxi. 6.
s Exod. viii. 5, 6.
t Acts xii. 21.—23.

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" in their land, and devoured the fruit of their " ground [u]." He dignifies theſe mean creatures, the locuſt, the canker-worm, the caterpiller, and the palmer-worm, with the character of his " great " army;" becauſe, as he ſends them for the puniſhment of a guilty people, they certainly execute his commiſſion [v]. To convince the Iſraelites, how eaſy it was for him to give them the poſſeſſion of the land of promiſe, he informs them that he had a very puny hoſt that could eaſily accompliſh the work: " I will ſend hornets before " thee, which ſhall drive out the Hivite, the Ca- " naanite, and the Hittite, from before thee;" and his promiſe was verified in their experience [w]. When we conſider theſe things, juſtly may we ſay with Bildad; " Is there any number of his ar- " mies [x]?"

Our God is ſtill known as " the LORD of hoſts," not only in his conduct towards his Church, but in her. The more ſenſible diſplays he hath formerly given of his power, may be viewed as emblems of his continued, but more ſpiritual, operation. As all true Iſraelites are " the hoſts " of JEHOVAH," he honours his ſervants with the name of *angels*. Did the ſtars in their courſes fight againſt Siſera? He " holdeth the ſeven " *ſtars* in his right-hand," and employs them in fighting againſt his enemies. Did he cauſe the ſun to ſtand ſtill on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon? In carrying on the work of redemption,

u Pſal. cv. 31, 34, 35. Joſh. xxiv. 12.
v Joel ii. 25.
w Exod. xxiii. 28.;
x Job xxv. 3.
y Rev. ii. 1. 8. &c.

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redemption, and for accompliſhing his purpoſes of mercy towards the Church, he hath often covered the *ſun* with blackneſs, and converted the *moon* into blood. He hath made the greateſt political luminaries to ſtand ſtill, to alter their courſes, or to hide their heads in darkneſs [z]. To expreſs the honour put on the prophets, called his two witneſſes, they are deſcribed as exerciſing a delegated power over the elements. "If any man "will hurt them, *fire* proceedeth out of their "mouth, and devoureth their enemies. Theſe "have power to ſhut *heaven*, that it rain not in "the days of their prophecy; and have power "over *waters* to turn them to blood, and to ſmite "the *earth* with all plagues [a]." Did God employ the weakeſt and vileſt inſtruments in puniſhing the Egyptians and Canaanites? This fitly repreſents the wonderful diſplay of his almighty power by means of the goſpel, in chooſing "the "baſe things of the world, and things which are "deſpiſed, yea, and things which are not, to bring "to nought things that are."

This name affords comfort to the Church in the moſt trying and perilous times. This "name of "the God of Jacob defends" her. "Although "an hoſt encamp" againſt her, in this ſhe may be confident. He, who is with her, is mightier by far than all that can be againſt her. She may be encompaſſed, not by one hoſt only, but by many. But they are the hoſts of JEHOVAH, under his government and control, how malevolent ſoever

z Rev. vi. 12.; viii. 12. a Rev. xi. 5, 6.

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their deſigns. We may therefore ſtill ſing; "The "LORD of hoſts is with us; the God of Jacob is "our refuge."

It is a ſpecial ground of conſolation, that this deſignation belongs to Jeſus, the Saviour of the Church. That King, who appeared in viſion to Eſaias, was the LORD of hoſts [b]; and we know that it was the glory of Chriſt, which the prophet ſaw [c]. Jeſus is often repreſented as the bridegroom and huſband of the Church: but of this glorious Huſband it is ſaid, "The LORD of hoſts "is his name [d]." Chriſt is that King and "Lord "of glory," who aſcended in the midſt of his angels. And "who is this King of glory? The "LORD of hoſts, he is the king of glory [e]."

This character conveys a comfortable aſſurance of the Church's triumph over all her incorrigible enemies. The Lord comforts his Church with the proclamation of this name, as her ſecurity for victory over ancient Babylon. "Thus ſaith the "LORD of hoſts, The children of Iſrael, and the "children of Judah, were oppreſſed together; "and all that took them captives held them faſt; "they refuſed to let them go. Their Redeemer "is ſtrong; The LORD of hoſts is his name: he "ſhall thoroughly plead their cauſe, that he may "give reſt to the land, and diſquiet the inhabi-"tants of Babylon [f]." As that kingdom of graven images was a type of myſtical Babylon, the fate of the one prefigured that of the other. Hence we

b Iſa. vi. 5. c John xii. 41. d Iſa. liv. 5.
e James ii. 1.; Pſal. xxiv. 10. f Jer. l. 33, 34.

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we are directed to the ſame almighty power, as the ground of our confidence: "Strong is the "LORD God who judgeth her g."

SECTION IV.

Of the Holineſs of God.—Of his Juſtice, as manifeſted in the Threatening and Curſe of the Law;—in the Antediluvian Hiſtory;—in the Deluge;—in the Deſtruction of the Cities of the Plain;—in the Reſemblance between Sin and Puniſhment;—in the Moſaic Economy;—in the Sufferings of the Meſſiah.

ACCORDING to the nature of this work, it is not neceſſary that we ſhould nicely diſtinguiſh between the Holineſs and Juſtice of God. As his holineſs is the perfect rectitude of his nature, according to which he infinitely loves what is morally good, and hates what is evil; his juſtice, as it regards his creatures at leaſt, is the actual diſplay of this eſſential holineſs. God hath manifeſted his holineſs, indeed, in various reſpects, in which there was no call for the operation of his juſtice. A few of theſe may be mentioned.

He diſplayed his holineſs in making all things very good. For the evil of ſin was not the work

g Rev. xviii. 8.

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of God. His rational creatures were endowed with moral goodneſs. As revelation is meant for man, a very particular account is given of his original rectitude. He was created "after the "image of God, in his likeneſs;" that is, "in "righteouſneſs and true holineſs [h]."

To his rational creatures he alſo gave a perfect law. Man was ſubjected to a poſitive precept. But we are by no means to ſuppoſe that the law was confined to this. The moral law was written on his heart by the finger of God: and this, as to the ſubſtance of it, is the tranſcript of infinite holineſs. In every reſpect, it is holy, juſt and good. It was ſo, even in its covenant-form. It is ſo, as a rule of life to believers. Although they are in no reſpect juſtified before God by their obedience to this law; yet, ſuch is his holineſs, that he requires that they ſhould be "perfect as "their Father in heaven is perfect," and ſtill preſs forward toward this perfection.

That law of ceremonies which God gave his ancient people, contains a ſtriking repreſentation of his holineſs. Whence did God enjoin ſo many waſhings and purifications? Had they, or could they have, any virtue in themſelves? Often did he aſſure them of the contrary. But by the obſervation of theſe, according to the imperfect nature of the diſpenſation, he would ſtill remind them of his infinite hatred of ſin. Did the touch of a dead body communicate ceremonial defilement? Thus the Supreme Lawgiver taught, in the moſt lively

[h] Gen. i. 26.; Eph. iv. 24.

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lively manner, the contaminating nature of all the actions of a natural man, and the neceſſity of being "purged from dead works, that we may "ſerve the living God." Why were there ſo many perſons, places and things, conſecrated by him, as partaking of an external holineſs? Can mere outward rites render a man well-pleaſing to God? Can any place be in itſelf more ſacred than another, to him who is LORD of the whole earth? Can irrational or inanimate creatures be the ſubjects of true holineſs? Nothing of this kind was ever meant. But it was the will of God, by theſe ſhadows and ſenſible repreſentations, daily to inculcate on a groſs and obdurate people the neceſſity of purity of heart, of being really devoted to the LORD, of being holy in all manner of converſation.

In a great variety of inſtances, the holineſs of God is practically demonſtrated by the operations of his juſtice. 1. Deeply to *impreſs* the *mind* of man with the *majeſty* of divine *juſtice*, ſeems to have been one ſpecial deſign of the Spirit of inſpiration, eſpecially in the writings of the Old Teſtament. This appears as the moſt prominent feature in the hiſtory given us of the covenant made with Adam. We have ſcarcely had time to contemplate and admire the goodneſs of God in the formation of man, and in the ample proviſion made for his ſuſtenance and comfort; ere we are made to tremble at the appearance of a more awful perfection. A promiſe this covenant

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nant undoubtedly contained; but it lay hid in that terrific threatening, "In the day thou eat-"eſt,—dying thou ſhalt die[i]." How ſoon is the voice of bleſſing ſucceeded by that of the curſe! The one would almoſt ſeem to be uttered, only to give tenfold energy to the other. The effect of the bleſſing, pronounced on the earth, has barely appeared, ere we are aroufed by that alarming denunciation, ever ſince verified in the experience of guilty man; "Curſed is the ground for thy "ſake[k]." When God had created "an help "meet" for man, he *bleſſed* them both, ſaying, "Be fruitful and *multiply*." When he pays them another viſit, this very increaſe, which originally flowed from the bleſſing, is converted into a curſe; "I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow, and thy "conception[l]." How quickly is the threatening changed into a fatal ſentence actually pronounced; "Unto duſt ſhalt thou return!" No ſooner is it pronounced, than it is partly executed; "So "he drove out the man," drove him out of that delightful garden, which had been created for his uſe, and in which he had been placed but a ſhort time before.

We advance but a ſingle ſtep further in the hiſtory of mankind, when we are arreſted by another diſplay of divine juſtice. The firſt man, born of woman, receives from the Supreme Judge a ſolemn warning as to the neceſſary connexion between ſin and puniſhment. To Cain he ſaid,

i Gen. ii. 17. k Chap. i. 24.; iii. 17. l Chap. i. 28.; iii. 16.

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ſaid, "If thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door[m]," that is, it lieth like a beaſt of prey, ready to devour; certain puniſhment awaits thee. And no ſooner had he tranſgreſſed, than his ſin laid hold of him, in its neceſſary conſequence. Formerly the earth was curſed for man's ſake. But here the curſe ſeems to expand, and to acquire an increaſe of force, with the increaſe of human guilt: "Now "art thou curſed from the earth[n]." Man was driven out of paradiſe before. In this firſt-born of man, the curſe is ſo forcibly exemplified, that he ſpeaks of himſelf as an outcaſt from creation: "Behold thou haſt driven me out this day from "the face of the earth[o]." In this language, however, he only expreſſes the more remarkable execution of the curſe, primarily executed on his parents. For he thus explains it; "From thy "face ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a fugitive and "a vagabond on the earth."

The hiſtory of about ſixteen hundred years is next condenſed in a few lines. Here, although the life of man was at its greateſt extent, the narrative is moſt abridged, as if the Spirit of inſpiration would teach us, that the preſent life, even at its utmoſt ſtretch, is but a ſhadow; and that the longeſt period, when paſt, ſeems to the mind, equally with the ſhorteſt, as a tale that hath been told. We are hurried down the ſtream of time, through eight ſucceſſive generations, and are allowed no pauſe, till we find ourſelves encompaſſed with the waters of deſtruction. On this awful

m Gen. iv. 7. n Chap. iii. 17.; iv. 11. o Chap. iii. 24.; iv. 14.

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ful diſplay of juſtice, the ſacred hiſtorian dwells much longer than on all the events which took place during ſixteen centuries before; as long as on the whole hiſtory of man after that of his creation. Such a diſplay of divine juſtice was this, that in God's conduct towards *mere* man, there never was, and we are aſſured there never will be, any thing equal to it, while time endures. It therefore claims our particular attention.

That this event might inconteſtably appear the effect of punitive juſtice, full warning was given. It was preceded by a denunciation of the vengeance purpoſed; while at the ſame time an opportunity was given for repentance, during the miniſtry of Noah, and the exerciſe of divine long-ſuffering, for an hundred and twenty years.

When this period was elapſed, God would no longer ſtrive with man by his word and Spirit. He proceeded to ſtrive with him in another way, by the threatened judgment. Then all nature conſpired againſt the impenitent rebel. God "call-" ed to the heavens from above, and to the earth, " that he might judge his people," by executing vengeance, in a moſt ſignal manner, on their enemies, according to the threatening previouſly denounced.

The deſtruction was ſuch as cannot be accounted for on natural principles. It was immediately the work of God. Every thing that takes place, in reſpect of ſupreme agency, proceeds from him. But he aſſerts his claim to this work as of an extraordinary

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traordinary kind, " I, even I do bring a flood of " waters upon the earth [p]." He claims it as his, conſidered as directly counteracting his former operation from the beginning of time. He repreſents it as ſuch a deviation from his ordinary courſe, as ſhall have no parallel while " earth re- " maineth [q]."

So remarkable was this vengeance, that it extended to the earth itſelf, and to its guiltleſs inhabitants and productions. God teſtified his infinite diſpleaſure at ſin, by involving all thoſe creatures in the puniſhment, that had in any reſpect been the inſtruments of human guilt, or the occaſions of it; that had miniſtered to man's neceſſities, or to his unbridled appetites; that, in a word, had been formerly ſubjected to his dominion. So complete was this deſtruction, that the whole frame of nature was unhinged. Sin had converted the earth into a moral chaos. " The earth was filled with violence; it was cor- " rupt:" for " all fleſh had corrupted his way " upon the earth." The profeſſors of the true religion were blended into one maſs with the ungodly world. The Supreme Judge therefore acted in ſuch a manner, as if he meant to reduce all things to their primæval chaos; in the execution of that awful ſentence, " I will deſtroy " them with the earth [r]." He ſeems as if he " were to undo the glorious work of creation. In that work, he had " divided the waters, which " were under the firmament, from the waters " which

[p] Gen. vi. 17. [q] Chap. viii. 22. [r] Chap. vi. 12, 13.

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" which were above it ." Now he brings them together again. " The fountains of the great " deep were broken up, and the windows of hea- " ven were opened [t]."

This deſtruction involved the profeſſors of the true religion, as well as the profane; the poſterity of Seth, that other ſeed appointed by God inſtead of Abel, together with the deſcendants of the murdering and rebellious Cain. As the Holy Spirit ceaſed to ſtrive even with " the ſons of God," becauſe they *alſo* were *fleſh* [u], under the dominion of carnality, and addicted to every wickedneſs; the deſerved vengeance reached them in common with others.

This judgment was as univerſal as it could well be, without the total deſtruction of the human race: and both the purpoſe and the promiſe of God prevented ſuch an event. Only one ſmall family was ſaved. The vengeance is moſt diſtinctly marked, as contraſted with the diſplay at the ſame time given of remunerative juſtice. " The LORD ſaid unto Noah, Come thou and all " thy houſe into the ark: for *thee* have I ſeen " righteous before me in this generation [v]." The wonderful preſervation of this ſingle family ſhewed in the cleareſt manner, that the deſtruction of all the world beſides was not the effect of blind chance; or the work of a ſupreme agent, who made no diſtinction between the righteous and the wicked. When I ſpeak of remunerative juſtice, however, it is not meant that Noah merited this deliverance by any righteouſneſs of his own. He " found

s Gen. i. 7. t Chap. vii. 11 u Chap. vi. 3. v Chap. vii. 1.

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"found grace in the eyes of the LORD [w]," as truſting in a better righteouſneſs [x]: nay, he "found "grace," by which he was enabled to make this his confidence. His ſalvation may be viewed as a reward. But it is no inconſiderable proof of its being a reward of grace, that it extended to his whole family, although we have too much evidence that one of them at leaſt was a wicked perſon.

This puniſhment, dreadful as it was, ſeems to have been indiſpenſably neceſſary. So low was the Church reduced before the deluge, that, according to human apprehenſion, ſhe could not have exiſted for another generation. Had ſhe not been "ſaved by water," ſhe muſt have been ſwept away by the flood of iniquity. Thus, the circumſtances vindicate the judgment; and ſhew, that God could not have acted otherwiſe, mankind continuing in ſuch a ſtate, without virtually renouncing his claim to the moral government of the world.

Such a general impreſſion did this judgment make on ſucceeding generations, that not only was divine juſtice, as manifeſted in this diſpenſation, celebrated by thoſe who adhered to the true religion [y]; but even heathen nations retain ſome traditionary knowledge of it to this day.

In a word, this puniſhment took place, and is recorded, as a lively prelude of the future judgment. As the world, "being overflowed with "water periſhed, the heavens and the earth which "are

w Gen. vi. 8. x Heb. xi. 7. y Job xxii. 15, 16.

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" are now,—are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire " againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of " ungodly men [z]." The one prefigured the other, in the unexpectedneſs of the event [a]; in the final ſeparation made between the righteous and the wicked [b]; in the immediate procuring cauſes of the deſtruction, the abuſe of divine longſuffering, and the rejection of goſpel-grace; in the completeneſs of the deſtruction; in the comparative paucity of thoſe who are ſaved [c]; and in the means by which their ſalvation is accompliſhed [d].

The ſacred hiſtorian gives us a progreſſive account of the manifeſtation of divine juſtice, in the confuſion of tongues at Babel [e]; in the plagues brought on Pharaoh and Abimelech, becauſe of their conduct towards the wife of Abraham [f]; in the deſtruction of the cities of the plain [g]; in the puniſhment of Eſau for his profanity [h]; in the remuneration of Jacob at the expence of the unrighteous Laban [i]; and in the judgments executed on the Egyptians becauſe of their cruelty to the Iſraelites. But on theſe things we cannot enlarge.

Only, with reſpect to the deſtruction of the cities of the plain, the following things may be obſerved, for illuſtrating the diſplay given of divine juſtice in this event. Their ſin is ſaid to have a *cry*,—a " cry waxen great before the " face of the LORD [k]." This is the very metaphor

z 2 Pet iii. 5.—7. a Mat. xxiv. 37.—39. b Mat. xxiv. 40.
c Luke xviii. 8. d 1 Pet. iii. 21. e Gen. xi. 1.—9.
f Gen. xii. 17.; xx. 18. g Gen. xix. 24. h Gen. xxvii 37.; Heb. xii. 16, 17.
i Gen. xxxi. 42. k Gen. xviii. 20.; xix. 13.

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phor uſed by God in addreſſing Cain; "The "voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me [l]." This language is by no means excluſively appropriated to the horrid crime of murder. It is applicable to every ſin, as expreſſive of the neceſſary connexion between ſin and puniſhment. For every ſin hath a voice of crimination againſt the ſinner. Luſt firſt cries to the ſinner for gratification; and when it "bringeth forth ſin," this immediately cries to God for vengeance. Its voice may not be heard by the tranſgreſſor himſelf, becauſe his conſcience may be ſeared; but it is ſtill heard by the Supreme Judge.

Deſcent is here, in an improper ſenſe, aſcribed to God: "I will go down now, and ſee whether "they have done altogether according to the cry "of it, which is come unto me [m]." There can be no change of place with him who is every where preſent; nor can examination be neceſſary to the eye of omniſcience. But God on this occaſion appeared on earth, and repreſents himſelf as employing thoſe means of inveſtigation which are neceſſary to man; to declare that all the acts of his vengeance are in perfect conformity to juſtice, that he never puniſhes without a ſufficient reaſon.

The account of his previous diſcourſe with Abraham, while it beautifully illuſtrates his wonderful condeſcenſion, at the ſame time teaches us, that, whatever be the objections of carnal men to the equity of his judgments, they will be approved by all who know divine holineſs. Abraham was a mer-

l Gen. iv. 10. m Gen. xviii. 21.

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ciful man, and this part of his character eminently appears in his conduct on this occaſion: but he could carry his interceſſion, in behalf of Sodom, no farther than this, that if there were ten righteous perſons there, it might be ſpared for their ſake. The holy angels, who ſojourned with Lot, teſtified no reluctance to the fulfilment of their commiſſion, although it was to iſſue in the utter deſtruction of theſe cities [n].

That the juſtice of God might be ſet in the cleareſt light, the inhabitants of Sodom were permitted to manifeſt their greedineſs, obduracy, and violence, in working uncleanneſs, at the very time that the heavenly viſitors came to their city. No regard to the laws of hoſpitality or of decency, no expoſtulations or reproofs, could reſtrain them. Parents do not conceal their wickedneſs from their children; but ſeem determined to train them up in their own abominable courſes. All the men of the city, "both old and young," beſet the houſe of Lot [o]. To theſe abandoned wretches, even the holy angels of God are objects of temptation, and ſeem a lawful prey. How could "their judgment linger," or "their damnation ſlumber?"

The circumſtances of this deſtruction were moſt awful. The puniſhment reſerved for all the wicked was anticipated. Hell was kindled on earth, and for this end rained from heaven on theſe atrocious ſinners. Their deſtruction comes from that quarter, to which alone they could look for mercy. The windows of heaven are opened a ſecond

n Gen. xviii. 33.; xix. 13.

o Gen. xix. 4.

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ſecond time, and pour out, not a flood of water, but of fire.

God appears more immediately in this judgment, than in the deluge itſelf. In accompliſhing it, one divine Perſon evidently co-operates with another. "The LORD rained upon Sodom, and up-"on Gomorrah, brimſtone and fire from the LORD "out of heaven [p]." It greatly heightens this diſplay of indignation, when we find that he, who afterwards came to ſave, on this occaſion appeared on earth, and in the likeneſs of our nature, as the deſtroyer.

The deſtruction, by means of the deluge, was gradual. But this was ſudden and inſtantaneous. Sodom was "overthrown as in a moment, and no "hands ſtayed on her [q]." This circumſtance ſhews the fierceneſs of divine indignation; and is a lively figure of that ſudden deſtruction which ſhall come on all the ungodly, when that ſame LORD, who came down to viſit Sodom, ſhall be "reveal-"ed from heaven in flaming fire [r]."

So urgent are the claims of juſtice, that even Lot ſeems in danger. While he lingered, the angels laid hold of his hand, and brought him forth, and ſet him without the city. JEHOVAH himſelf ſaid to him, "Eſcape for thy life;—eſcape to the "mountain, leſt thou be conſumed." For, in public viſitations for ſin, even "the righteous ſcarce-"ly are ſaved [s]." Lot had no proper call to take up his reſidence among theſe wicked men; and

p Gen. xix. 24. q Lam. iv. 6. r 2 Pet. ii. 6.—9.
s 1 Pet. iv. 18.

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his deliverance is repreſented as wholly the fruit of mercy [t].

This deſtruction, in fine, was meant as a ſtriking figure of the *eternal* puniſhment of the wicked. Hence it is ſaid, that theſe cities "are ſet "forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance "of eternal fire [u]." As the manner in which they were puniſhed prefigured the fire of hell; the perpetuity of their deſtruction is meant as a permanent emblem of everlaſting deſtruction, in "the lake that burneth for ever and ever." Theſe cities "ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire." For it is the will of God that they ſhould never be rebuilt: and not only is the place where they once ſtood, covered with the Dead Sea, and to the higheſt degree ſalt, although in an inland ſituation, whence it is alſo called the Salt Sea; but, as it ſtill manifeſts the effects of burning in the extreme barrenneſs of the adjacent country, this burning is in ſome ſenſe continued, in conſequence of the ſulphur, ſalt, and *aſphaltus* or bitumen abounding in the ſea, or incorporated with the ſoil. Hence, a country lying under the moſt awful effects of divine vengeance is thus deſcribed: "The whole land is brimſtone and ſalt, and burn-"ing; that it is not ſown, nor beareth, nor any "graſs groweth thereon; like the overthrow of "Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, "which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in "his wrath [v]."

II. The

t Gen. xix. 16. 19. u Jude 7. v Deut. xxix. 22.—24. See Wells's Geography Old Teſt. vol. i. p. 290.—297. New Teſt. vol. iv. p. 81.

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11. The juſtice of God has been often diſplayed, in the moſt ſtriking light, in the remarkable *reſemblance* between the *ſin* and the *puniſhment*. In the old world, iniquity had come in like a flood; and God ſwept away the tranſgreſſors by a flood of waters. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah burnt with the fire of unnatural luſt; and God deſtroyed them by preternatural fire. Pharaoh would not let Iſrael go, although God's ſon, his firſt-born; therefore he ſlew the firſt-born of Pharaoh, and of all Egypt [w]. This cruel deſpot commanded, that all the male children of the Iſraelites ſhould be drowned [x]; and in this very manner God deſtroyed him and all the ſtrength of his kingdom. Nadab and Abihu "offered ſtrange "fire before the LORD; and there went out fire "from the LORD, and devoured them [y]." Adonibezek, although a heathen, was obliged to acknowledge the ſtrictneſs of divine retribution, when his thumbs and great toes were cut off: "Threeſcore and ten kings," ſaid he, "having "their thumbs and their great toes cut off, ga"thered their meat under my table: as I have "done, ſo God hath requited me [z]." Samſon did not make a covenant with his eyes, ſo that they proved his ſnare: and he was chaſtiſed by having them put out [a]. As the ſword of Agag, king of Amalek, "made women childleſs," ſo was his mother made "childleſs among women [b]." Abſalom's vanity as to his perſon ſeems to have been

w Exod. iv. 22, 23. x Exod. i. 22. y Lev. x. 1.
z Judg. i. 6, 7. a Judg. xiv. 2.; xvi. 4. b 1 Sam. xv. 33.

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the ſource of his rebellion, and of his ruin [c]. This vanity was eſpecially diſcovered about the hair of his head; and by this, as would ſeem, he was entangled in the oak, where he met his merited fate [d].

Many other inſtances of the ſame kind might be mentioned. But I haſten to obſerve,

III. That the *Moſaic economy* ſeems to have been eſpecially deſigned to give the Church the deepeſt impreſſions of the *punitive juſtice* of God; and to prepare her, by awful diſplays of ſeverity, for receiving the doctrine of atonement by the ſufferings of a divine Perſon. It had this effect partially on the Church of Iſrael. For the law generated a ſpirit of fear, which was occaſionally diſcovered even by wicked men. The faith of genuine believers, however faintly, diſcerned the neceſſity of a better ſatisfaction than could be made by the blood of bulls or goats. But this inſtruction was eſpecially meant for the New-Teſtament Church. Even to the prophets "it was "revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us "they did miniſter the things that are now re-"ported [e]."

The law could not annul the covenant made with Abraham. It was added in ſubſerviency to this. It was "a ſhadow of good things to come." But in itſelf conſidered, and as it affected the great body of that people to whom it was given, it was the miniſtration of death, and of condemnation [f].

I. If

c 2 Sam. xiv. 25.; xv. 6.
d 2 Sam. xiv. 26.; xviii. 9.
e 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.
f 2 Cor. iii. 7.

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1. If we consider the *matter* of the revelation made from Mount Sinai, it will appear that divine justice was eminently brought into view. There was no renovation of the covenant of works made with Adam; for the Church was under that better covenant revealed to Abraham. But there was an exhibition of the law in its covenant form, that by it might be "the knowledge of "sin g." It was revealed in all the strictness of its precept, and severity of its threatening. According to the tenor of the Mosaic dispensation, and particularly of the ceremonial law, the Israelites were still in danger of contracting defilement, and of being set apart as unclean; and, in various cases, of being excluded from the camp; as a prelude of the eternal excommunication of all sinners from the favour and fellowship of God, and of his saints. By their frequent purifications, and by the offerings they had to present, in consequence of defilement, in many cases unavoidably contracted; as well as by the daily sacrifices, morning and evening, and their greater solemnities of this kind; there was a constant "remem-"brance of sins h," and therefore of their liableness to the stroke of justice. It was the will of the Supreme Lawgiver, that this should be the case, and the dispensation was framed to answer this design; that sin might be restrained among a rebellious people. By the multiplied penalties with which the law was fenced, death continually stared them in the face; so that we need not

 wonder,

g Rom. iii. 20. h Heb. x. 3.

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wonder, that through fear of it they ſhould be "all their lifetime ſubject to bondage."

It is no inconſiderable proof of the ſeverity of this diſpenſation, that, notwithſtanding the multitude of ſacrifices appointed for different tranſgreſſions, there were ſome for which no atonement was admitted. This was the caſe in general as to preſumptuous ſins. If a man ſinned from ignorance, atonement might be made. "But the "ſoul that doeth ought preſumptuouſly, whether "he be born in the land, or a ſtranger, the ſame "reproacheth the LORD; and that ſoul ſhall be "cut off from among his people. Becauſe he hath "deſpiſed the word of the LORD, and broken his "commandment, that ſoul ſhall utterly be cut "off; his iniquity ſhall be upon him [i]." In this ſenſe it is ſaid, that "every tranſgreſſion and diſ-"obedience received a juſt recompence of re-"ward;" becauſe every ſtubborn diſobedience, as the expreſſion ſignifies, was ſeverely puniſhed, either immediately by the hand of God, or if there were witneſſes, by the hand of man [l]. The law itſelf knew no mercy, and admitted of no mitigation of its ſentence; although the Lawgiver might grant a diſpenſation, as he did in the caſe of David, who ought to have ſuffered death for the crimes of adultery and murder [m]. "He that "ſinned againſt Moſes' law, died without mer-"cy [n]." It was fit that this ſhould be the caſe, that the law, under which the Iſraelites were, might

i Num. xv. 30, 31. k Heb. ii. 2. l Deut. xvii. 6.
m 2 Sam. xii. 13. n Heb. x. 28.

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might give a juſt repreſentation of the unforgiving character of the law as a broken covenant; and of the impoſſibility of eſcaping, unleſs in the way of being ſaved from its curſe.

2. Let us now attend to the *manner* in which this law was revealed. This was ſuch, as to be evidently meant to fill the Iſraelites with fear of the holineſs and juſtice of the Lawgiver; and to teach them the impoſſibility of having any comfortable intercourſe with him, but through a Mediator. All thoſe circumſtances are here combined, that had the moſt direct tendency to produce theſe effects. Well may it be called "a fiery "law [o]." For as it expreſſed the fire of his holy indignation againſt ſin, God actually ſpoke the words of this law "out of the midſt of the fire [p]." The very manner of its promulgation teſtified that "our God is a conſuming fire."

The Apoſtle, when addreſſing the believing Hebrews with reſpect to their diſtinguiſhed privileges under the new diſpenſation, particularly enumerates moſt of the alarming circumſtances which attended the promulgation of the law. "Ye are "not come to the mount that might be touched, "and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, "and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a "trumpet, and the voice of words, which *voice* "they that heard, entreated that the word ſhould "not be ſpoken to them any more. For they "could not endure that which was command-"ed. And if ſo much as a beaſt touch the moun-"tain,

o Deut. xxxiii. 2. p Deut. v. 22.

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" tain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a " dart. And ſo terrible was the ſight, that Mo- " ſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake [q]." He enumerates theſe circumſtances, to impreſs the reader with the deepeſt ſenſe of the ſeverity of the law; and alſo to declare the manner in which God operates on the minds of men by means of it [r].

God brought his people to the foot of an high mountain, from the top of which he ſpoke to them. For even when he ſpeaks to men in the voice of the law, he keeps them at an awful diſtance, as expreſſive of his " terrible majeſty." This mountain was abſolutely barren, and ſituated in the midſt of a deſart, deſtitute of all the means of life; and without inhabitants, no one being preſent but God and the people of Iſrael. This is the firſt thing that God effects by means of the law. He brings the ſinner to a ſenſe of his guilt, of his deſolate and deſtitute ſituation, as wandering in the wilderneſs, and ſhut up there; ſo that there is no way of eſcape, no relief from any quarter, none that can interpoſe between him and the living God.

They came to a mountain " that burned with " fire;" or, as the words may be read, " to the " burning fire." The mountain " burnt with fire " unto the midſt of heaven [s]." This denoted the fire of God's jealouſy, or his holy indignation againſt ſin. Therefore it was ſaid to Iſrael; " The " LORD

q Heb. xii. 18.—21.

r See Owen on the paſſage.

s Deut. iv. 11.

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"LORD thy God is a conſuming fire, even a jea-
"lous God [t]." The Church explains the meaning of the ſymbol, when ſhe makes this inquiry; "Wilt thou be angry for ever? ſhall thy jea-
"louſy burn like fire [u]?" This proclaimed his holineſs and juſtice, as diſplayed in the puniſhment of ſin. "A fire goeth before him, and
"burneth up his enemies round about [v]." As God, in a work of conviction, diſcovers to ſinners their guilt, he ſhews them that they are expoſed to the great and conſuming fire of his juſtice.

"Blackneſs and darkneſs" are alſo mentioned among the awful circumſtances attending this revelation. Although the fire burnt with the greateſt violence, the light ariſing from it was overpowered by a mixture of blackneſs or thick clouds; which muſt have rendered its appearance truly horrible. The light itſelf was as darkneſs; and emphatically taught, that a ſinner convinced of his guilt, and alarmed by a diſcovery of the fire of divine juſtice, can diſcern no ray of conſolation there. He ſees nothing but "blackneſs
"and darkneſs," the gloomy prelude of "the
"blackneſs of darkneſs for ever;" as to all that the law, conſidered as a covenant, can make known.

The blackneſs and darkneſs were accompanied with "tempeſt;" as in nature they are generally its forerunners. In this term the apoſtle ſeems to include the thunder, and lightening, and earthquake.

t Deut. iv. 24. u Pſal. lxxix. 5. x Pſal. xcvii. 3.

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quake [w]. This was a lively emblem of that ſtorm of wrath which ſhall "ſweep away the refuge "of lies;" and alſo exhibits the progreſs of the Spirit's operation, when acting as a Spirit of conviction. By means of this law, he raiſes a ſtorm in the conſcience; for "the law worketh "wrath [x]."

They alſo heard "the ſound of a trumpet." This was "exceeding loud." It "ſounded long, "and waxed louder and louder [y]." This proclaimed the majeſty of God as the Lawgiver and Judge of Iſrael. By means of it, they received a ſolemn ſummons to appear before him; and to liſten to the precepts and penalties of his law. In like manner, when the law is powerfully brought into the ſinner's conſcience, it hath to him "the "ſound of a trumpet." Convinced that he is a criminal, and worthy of eternal death; he hears it as his ſummons to appear before the tribunal of juſtice; as a preſage of that "trump of God," by which he ſhall be ſummoned to his bar at the day of judgment. While under the power of the law, he can expect nothing but a ſentence of eternal condemnation. When he hears this trumpet, it is to him "the alarm of war." "Shall the "trumpet be blown, and the people not be a-"fraid?" The longer it is blown, it is ſtill the louder. The ſinner, if conſcience be not lulled aſleep, inſtead of diſcovering any ground of hope from the law, the longer he conſiders it, the more he

[w] Exod. xix. 16. 18. [x] Rom. iv. 15. [y] Exod. xix. 16. 19.

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he ſees his danger; and is ready to be plunged into deſpair.

They heard "the voice of words, which voice "they that heard, entreated that the word ſhould "not be ſpoken to them any more." This was the voice of God himſelf, pronouncing the *words* of the ten commandments, in the hearing of all Iſrael. This is called "a great voice [z]," and muſt have been very awful; for it "ſhook the earth [a]." The elders came near to Moſes, and ſaid in the name of the people; "If we hear the voice of "the LORD our God any more, then we ſhall "die [b]." This fitly repreſented the killing power of the law, when brought home to the conſcience by the Spirit of conviction. Such was the experience of Paul: "When the commandment came, "—I died [c]."

"They could not endure that which was com-"manded." Theſe words, according to the view of ſome interpreters, reſpect the whole law. But there is undoubtedly a ſpecial connexion ſtated with the injunction immediately following,—"And if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mount, it "ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a dart." This reſpected man as well as beaſt. But the apoſtle particularly mentions it in reference to the latter; becauſe it contained the greateſt diſplay of divine ſeverity, and was that which eſpecially affected the minds of the Iſraelites. Nor can we well imagine a more ſtriking diſcovery of this ſeverity, than that even an innocent beaſt muſt

z Deut. v. 22. a Heb. xii. 26. b Deut. v. 27. c Rom. vii. 9.

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muſt be treated as if morally guilty, if it accidentally treſpaſſed within the bounds ſet round the mountain. Nor was this all. It was to be viewed as accurſed; and therefore to be ſtoned or ſhot, that no man might be defiled by touching it [d]. The ſtrictneſs of the precept had the ſame effect on the Iſraelites, that it has had ever ſince. For it has an irritating power on the luſts of men. From the very reſtraints that a holy and juſt God impoſes on theſe, ſin appears more deſireable. Hence the apoſtle teſtifies; "Sin, taking occaſion "by the commandment, wrought in me all man-"ner of concupiſcence [e]."

Both what was ſeen and heard was ſo terrible, that even Moſes ſaid, "I do exceedingly tremble "and quake." When this revelation was ſo overwhelming to Moſes, who had formerly heard the voice of God from the burning buſh, and was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed by his holineſs; how could it be but dreadful to the guilty Iſraelites, who, deſtitute of faith in God, could view him only as an enemy?

3. Let us, in the laſt place, attend to the *puniſhments* actually inflicted, according to the tenor of this law.

Theſe were often *ſudden*. Puniſhment followed hard after ſin, to ſhew the neceſſary connexion between the one and the other. This was eſpecially the caſe, when the puniſhment was inflicted by the hand of God. When the Iſraelites luſted for fleſh, God gave them their own deſire. "But while "their

d Exod. xix. 13. Rom. vii. 8.

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"their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath "of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of "them [f]." When they murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron, ſaying, "Ye have killed the people "of the LORD," he threatened to "conſume them "as in a moment;" and although Aaron inſtantly took a cenſer with incenſe, to make atonement, and "ran into the midſt of the congregation," fourteen thouſand and ſeven hundred had already periſhed [g].

Theſe puniſhments were very *awful*. In both the inſtances juſt now referred to, God deſtroyed the people by a plague. On different occaſions, fire was the inſtrument he employed; a fit inſtrument indeed, under the adminiſtration of that "fiery law." What could be more alarming to the whole congregation, than that two brothers, whom they had ſeen but a little before ſolemnly conſecrated to the office of the prieſthood, the nephews of Moſes, the eldeſt ſons of the high-prieſt, ſhould be conſumed by fire from JEHOVAH? The earthquake, at the giving of the law, would almoſt ſeem to expreſs the nature of its judgments. For, afterwards, the earth opened its mouth, and ſwallowed up the rebellious company of Korah.

The puniſhments, which according to the law were inflicted by the hand of man, were in various inſtances attended with peculiar *ſolemnity*. In the caſe of blaſphemy, all who heard it were to lay their hands on the head of the criminal [h]. This denoted their ſolemn atteſtation of the truth of

[f] Pſal. lxxviii. 29.—31. [g] Num. xvi. 41.—49. [h] Lev. xxiv. 16.

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of the charge brought againſt him. But it implied more. Thoſe, who laid their hands on his head, devolved the guilt, that, in conſequence of his crime, might attach to them or to the nation at large, wholly on himſelf; demanded the execution of the ſentence appointed by God, that this iniquity might not be viſited on the congregation of Iſrael; left the blood of the criminal on his own head, and ſolemnly acknowledged the juſtice of the puniſhment. This rite is evidently of the ſame meaning with that appointed for every man who preſented an offering for his ſins. As transferring his guilt to the victim, he was to lay his hands on its head [i]. Thus was the high-prieſt to do on the great day of atonement [k]. This ordinance, then, with reſpect to a criminal, directly tended to impreſs the Iſraelites with a ſenſe, both of the condemning, and of the defiling nature of ſin; and taught them that its influence was ſo great, that even the ſin of an individual would contaminate a whole ſociety, unleſs it was expiated according to the laws given by the Supreme Judge.

The ſame thing appears from another inſtitution. The criminal adjudged to death was to ſuffer *without the camp*. As it denoted the excluſion of all the finally impenitent from the preſence of God, it intimated that the very blood of ſuch a perſon carried defilement.

In many caſes, the *whole* people were to take an active hand in the execution of the ſentence. All

i Lev. iv. 24. 29. k Chap. xvi. 21.

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All the congregation were to ſtone the ſabbath-breaker [l]. The hands of all the people were alſo to be on him who ſhould entice to idolatry [m]. Thus were they all ſolemnly to approve of the puniſhment; and virtually to be witneſſes againſt themſelves, if they ſhould ever be guilty of the crime.

The ſevere temporal puniſhments of the law extended to *ſaints*, equally with others. Miriam, the propheteſs [n], was ſmitten with leproſy, becauſe ſhe murmured againſt Moſes [o]. Neither was Moſes "the man of God," nor Aaron, "the holy "one of JEHOVAH," permitted to bring the Iſraelites into Canaan; becauſe they rebelled at the water of Meribah, in ſmiting the rock, when God had commanded that they ſhould ſpeak to it; and in charging Iſrael, in their unhallowed wrath, with that very crime of which they were themſelves at this time guilty [p]. Uzzah, long afterwards, from miſguided piety, laid his hand on the ark of God, when the oxen in the cart, on which it was borne, ſhook it by their unſteady motion. But "the an-"ger of the LORD was kindled againſt Uzzah, and "God ſmote him there for his error, and there he "died by the ark of God [q]." What a damp muſt this have brought on the hearts of the Iſraelites, in the midſt of their joy on account of the return of the ark! Even the man after God's own heart was diſpleaſed. But as Uzzah was not a prieſt, and therefore tranſgreſſed the law when he touch-

l Num. xv. 35. m Deut. xiii. 9. n Exod. xv 20.
o Num. xii. 1.—10. p Chap. xx. 10.—12. 24. q 2 Sam. vi. 7.

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ed the ark[r]; God in this affecting manner manifeſted his jealouſy, and taught his people that he would be ſanctified in all that drew nigh him. Thus alſo he reproved David and the Iſraelites, for ſuffering the ark to be drawn on a cart by beaſts, when it ſhould have been carried on ſtaves by the Levites. The ſons of Kohath themſelves, though ſet apart for bearing the ſanctuary and all the conſecrated veſſels, might not *touch* any holy thing, under pain of death[s]. Even when God forgave his people, in as far as their ſins merited eternal wrath, he "took vengeance on their in-"ventions," by temporal judgments extending to death itſelf[t].

The deſtruction of this rebellious people was almoſt *univerſal*. All thoſe, who came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, except two perſons, periſhed in the wilderneſs. For "the LORD's anger was kindled in the wilderneſs, "until all the generation that had done evil in "the ſight of the LORD was conſumed[u].

For the ſin of *one*, God puniſhed the *whole* congregation of Iſrael. Achan took ſome of the goods of Jericho; although the city, with all that was in it, had been devoted of God. The crime was charged againſt the Iſraelites in general, and they were puniſhed on this account. "The "children of Iſrael committed a treſpaſs in the "accurſed thing.—Therefore the children of Iſ-"rael could not ſtand before their enemies,—be-"cauſe

r Num. xviii. 3, 4. s Chap. iv. 15. t Pſal. xcix. 8,
u Num. xxxii. 10.—13.

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"cauſe they were accurſed." They fled before the men of Ai; and God declared that he would "not be with them any more," except they deſtroyed the accurſed perſon from among them [v]. Some of them perhaps knew, but did not reveal, the crime of Achan. God, at any rate, would diſplay his juſtice in bringing ſin to light; and by the tokens of his diſpleaſure at the whole camp, would teach them to fear ſin, as that alone which expoſed them to danger; to be diligent in ſearching it out; and to be careful that others, as well as themſelves, were obedient to his commandments. Thus he figuratively teſtified the intimate union among the members of a church; and the neceſſity, not only of purging out error and corruption, when diſcovered, but of exerciſing a holy jealouſy, leſt it ſhould be working in ſecret, becauſe "a little leaven leaveneth the "whole lump." Were the Iſraelites accurſed becauſe of Achan? And can any church expect God's bleſſing, if ſhe is not careful to "take away "the accurſed thing?" Would an angel of God be accurſed, did he preach another goſpel, than that which Chriſt hath given [w]; and can a church eſcape the curſe, if ſhe receive it, or "bear them "which are evil [x]?"

In a word, God often diſplayed the terror of his juſtice, by involving, in the deſtruction brought on the tranſgreſſor, *every thing* that pertained to him. When he would teſtify his indignation againſt thoſe who engaged in the rebellion of Korah,

v Joſh. vii. 1. 4. 12. w Gal. i. 8. x Rev. ii. 2.

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rah, " the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallow-
" ed them up, and their houſes, and all the men
" that appertained to Korah, and all their goods.
" They, and all that appertained to them, went
" down alive into the pit, and the earth cloſed
" upon them [y]." In the caſe of Achan, by the expreſs commandment of JEHOVAH, judgment was to be executed by the hand of man, in all this extent. God had ſaid, " It ſhall be, that he
" that is taken with the accurſed thing, ſhall be
" burnt with fire, he and all that he hath."—And ſuch was the puniſhment inflicted. " Joſhua and
" all Iſrael took Achan the ſon of Zerah, and the
" ſilver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold,
" and his ſons, and his daughters, and his oxen,
" and his aſſes, and his ſheep, and all that he had:
" —and all Iſrael ſtoned him with ſtones, and
" burned them with fire [z]." We intend afterwards to conſider the viſitation of the guilt of fathers on their children; and therefore ſhall not enter on it here. But it deſerves our particular regard, that the deſtruction extended even to things irrational and inanimate. The tents, and all the ſubſtance that was in the poſſeſſion of theſe ſinners, periſhed with them [a]. Theſe could not poſſibly be the ſubjects of moral guilt or pollution. But as, in this puniſhment, " they became
" a ſign [b]," an enſample not to the Iſraelites only, but to the Church in every age, expreſſive of the holineſs and jealouſy of God; their very ſubſtance

y Num. xvi. 32, 33. z Joſh. vii. 15, 24, 25. a Deut. xi. 6.
b Num. xxvi. 10.

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ſtance is treated as accurſed, that we might hence perceive the contaminating nature of ſin, and its contagious influence, as ſubjecting even innocent creatures to the effects of the curſe. This puniſhment alſo declares the rigorous claims of divine holineſs and juſtice; which demand the utter extinction of ſin itſelf, and of every thing that may be a memorial of it.

We have already obſerved, that the Moſaic economy was deſigned to prepare the Church for receiving the doctrine of atonement by the ſufferings of a divine Perſon. Such was its effect on the Iſraelites, obdurate as they were, that they virtually acknowledged, that ſinful man can have no comfortable intercourſe with the holy and juſt God, but through a *Mediator*. This appears from the very manner in which God ſpake the words of the law at firſt; for the Second Perſon, as the Mediator and Angel of the covenant, ſpake from Mount Sinai. But this the Iſraelites underſtood not. When, therefore, they witneſſed the terrors of this law, they ſaid to Moſes, as with one voice, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let "not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die [c]." God aſſented to this propoſal, as it was his will to teach them the neceſſity of it [d]; and to ſhew them that his law was "given in the hand of a mediator." Moſes deſcribes the character of the great Prophet as correſponding with his in this very reſpect [e].

 IV. Notwith-

c Exod. xx. 19. d Deut. v. 24. e Chap. xviii. 15.—18.

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IV. Notwithſtanding the terrors of this law, and the ſevere puniſhments inflicted under it, the moſt ſtriking diſplay that ever hath been, or poſſibly can be, given of the holineſs and juſtice of God, is in the *ſufferings* of our *Redeemer*. Here we are firſt to attend to the ſpotleſs innocence of the ſufferer. "No guile was found in his lips." There was no ſtain of ſin in his heart. From his conception to his death, he was "holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners." "Yet "it pleaſed JEHOVAH to bruiſe him; he hath put "him to grief." He, "who knew no ſin, was "made ſin for us," made a ſin-offering, and treated as if he had been the moſt atrocious ſinner that ever appeared on earth.

Nor are we to view him merely as an innocent man, but as "the Holy One of God." He is "the man, the fellow of JEHOVAH of hoſts;" who, as to his divine nature, was infinitely remote from ſuffering, as well as infinitely above the law, with reſpect to both its precept and its curſe. Yet the Father, ſuſtaining the character of Judge, gave forth this command; "Awake, O "ſword, againſt my Shepherd, againſt the man "that is my fellow; ſmite the Shepherd[f]." If the puniſhment of one perfectly innocent, as bearing the iniquities of others by imputation, exhibits, in a ſtriking point of view, the evil and demerit of ſin, the holineſs and juſtice of God, and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of a real atonement; how much more fully does this appear when we

[f] Zech. xiii. 7.

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we view ſin as puniſhed in the adorable Perſon of the Son of God! What an affecting thought, that it was "the Prince of life," who was killed; "the juſt One," who "ſuffered for the unjuſt;" "the Lord of glory," who was crucified!

We are further to conſider the *ſeverity* of theſe ſufferings. As "God ſpared not his own Son, "but gave him up to the death," ſo he ſpared him not as to the meaſure of his ſufferings. The human nature was inſeparably united to the divine, in one perſon; yet ſo overwhelming was his agony, that he cried out; "My ſoul is exceeding "ſorrowful, even unto death;" his ſtrength was dried up as a potſherd; and his heart was melted like wax. Although he received uninterrupted ſupplies from the Holy Spirit, without meaſure; yet ſo unſpeakable was his ſenſe of wrath, and ſo hot was the indignation of God as a judge, that his holy human ſoul ſhrunk back with horror from the cup given him to drink. He had been atteſted from heaven as God's beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed; yet the Father hid his face, and left the glorious Sufferer under ſuch darkneſs of ſoul, as was but faintly figured by the preternatural darkneſs that covered the earth. "The pangs of hell took hold on him." His ſoul was made an offering for ſin. He ſuſtained infinite wrath without any abatement. If theſe things were done "in a green tree, what "ſhall be done in the dry?"

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From the preceding conſiderations it is evident, that there is a neceſſary and inſeparable *connexion* between *ſin* and *puniſhment*. As this is eſtabliſhed by the ſupreme Lawgiver, it flows from his nature as God. For he cannot "behold iniqui-"ty." He neceſſarily ſeeks its deſtruction, with all the energy of his infinite nature. Every ſin is an appeal, both to his juſtice, and to his power: and however the ſinner may flatter himſelf, this is the language in which God addreſſes him; "Be "ſure your ſin will find you out [g]." Sin acts as an informer againſt itſelf. As it brings this information in man's own conſcience, it as certainly does ſo at the bar of juſtice. Nay, in relation to the neceſſary exerciſe of juſtice, ſin is here, by a ſtrong figure, repreſented as a meſſenger that purſues the ſinner till it overtake him.

We perceive alſo, that the *law* affords *no comfort* to the ſinner. It was never revealed with this deſign. For "what things ſoever the law "ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law, "that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the "world may become guilty before God [h]." We can neither obey its precept, nor bear its curſe. What folly then is it, for man to think of being juſtified by a law that utters no ſentence, ſave that of eternal condemnation!

We learn the *neceſſity* of a complete *atonement* for ſin. This is the great doctrine taught by the law, as it was revealed from Mount Sinai. It was meant as a ſchoolmaſter to bring men to Chriſt.

g Numb. xxxii. 23. h Rom. iii. 19.

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Chriſt. It treated the Iſraelites with all ſeverity. It applied the rod of its threatening and curſe; that they might ſee the neceſſity of fleeing from it, to Him who was revealed, although more obſcurely, as the end "of the law for righteouſ-"neſs." By the multitude of its ſacrifices, as it could never be reaſonably believed that God would accept of the blood of a beaſt as an atonement for the ſin of man, it both declared the neceſſity of a complete ſatisfaction, and directed them to look for one of this character in the ſufferings of the promiſed Meſſiah. By the conſtant repetition of ſuch ſacrifices, their inſufficiency was taught, and the neceſſity of one that ſhould for ever take away ſin.

The Church is now delivered from the ceremonial law. But the law, as a covenant of works, hath the ſame language. It teſtifies to the ſinner that it hath nothing in reſerve for him but eternal death. When it comes with power to the heart, man is convinced that except he be ſaved through the righteouſneſs of a Surety, he muſt certainly periſh.

We may perceive the *grace* of our God, in providing a remedy, and eſpecially in doing it at ſuch infinite expence. Many pretend to plead for the riches of grace, at the expence of denying the atonement? "How does grace appear," do they ſay, "if complete ſatisfaction muſt be "made for ſin? Does it not exhibit this per-"fection in a far more engaging light, if we "view God as pardoning ſin without requiring "any

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"any atonement to juſtice?" But this doctrine, ſo far from illuſtrating, obſcures the grace of God. If a friend confers a favour on us, we eſteem the favour in proportion to what it coſt him. Were it conſiſtent with the nature of God, to pardon ſin without any atonement, the diſplay of his grace would be far inferior. But when we know from his word, that he "will by no means clear "the guilty," that, from his eſſential and neceſſary love of righteouſneſs, he puniſhes the wicked; we ſee the higheſt reaſon to admire the grace of God in the gift of his own Son as a ſacrifice. This is as much grace to us, as if no atonement had been neceſſary; becauſe all the bleſſings of the covenant are given "without money, and "without price:" and it is *commended* to us, exhibited in the moſt engaging point of view, becauſe "God ſo loved the world, as to give his on-"ly begotten Son."

We learn the *impoſſibility* of *eſcaping* the ſtroke of divine juſtice, if we deſpiſe the remedy. "How "ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalva-"tion?" He that deſpiſed Moſes' law, died with-"out mercy.—Of how much ſorer puniſhment "ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden "under foot the Son of God?" And all tread him under foot, who refuſe to put the crown of their ſalvation on his head.

In fine, we perceive the neceſſity of *reverence* in all our Chriſtian ſervice. In this very way, the apoſtle, writing to the Hebrews, applies what he had ſaid with reſpect to the terrors of the law, and

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and the ſuperior privileges of the goſpel. "Where-
"fore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be
"moved, let us have grace whereby we may ſerve
"God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.
"For our God is a conſuming fire [i]." He mani-
feſted himſelf, in this character, under the law.
The diſpenſation under which we live, is very
different with reſpect to immediate temporal tokens
of divine indignation. But we ſtill ſerve the ſame
God. His holineſs is invariably the ſame, even
although it is not manifeſted by ſuch diſplays of
his juſtice. But even theſe have not been want-
ing under the New Teſtament. What affecting
monuments of divine diſpleaſure were Judas Iſ-
cariot, and Ananias and Sapphira [k]! God ſet them
up, in the very dawn of the goſpel-church, as
beacons to deter us from tampering with his juſ-
tice. For even *our* God is a conſuming fire. Such
temporal judgments are far leſs frequent under
this diſpenſation. But for this we may ſee a ſuf-
ficient reaſon. The eternal ſtate is more clearly
revealed: and in this the fire of divine juſtice
will burn with far greater heat, than ever it did
in temporal puniſhment. Therefore ſaith the a-
poſtle, in the paſſage formerly referred to; "See
"that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: for if they
"eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth,
"*much more* ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away
"from him that ſpeaketh from heaven [l]."

SECT.

i Heb. xii. 28, 29.
l Heb. xii. 25.

k Acts v. 1.—11.

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SECTION V.

On Divine Juſtice, in viſiting the Iniquities of Fathers upon their Children.—Children puniſhed for the ſins of Parents.—Parents puniſhed in their Children.—Iniquity viſited on thoſe eſpecially who continue in the wicked courſes of their Progenitors.—Some ſins more remarkably viſited on ſucceeding generations, than others.—This viſitation extends farther than to temporal puniſhment.—Something in human conduct analogous to this procedure of Divine Juſtiec.—Objections anſwered.

THE Juſtice of God, like every other perfection of his nature, is incomprehenſible. We often find reaſon to exclaim; "His judgments are a "great deep!—How unſearchable are his judg- "ments, and his ways paſt finding out!" But we need not wonder that our weak and depraved reaſon ſhould be loſt in the contemplation of that adorable perfection, which is employed in the puniſhment of ſin; as there is an extent in its evil, which we cannot comprehend.

The divine conduct, in viſiting the iniquities of fathers upon their children, is one of thoſe awful diſplays of juſtice, which it ſeems to be a ſpecial

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cial design of revelation to set before us in the most conspicuous light. With a sincere desire to discover "the mind of the Spirit," let us humbly inquire into the doctrine which the Holy Scriptures contain on this important subject.

1. It is consistent with divine justice, to punish children *for* the *sins* of their parents, although they have had no hand in these. This principle is established by a great variety of facts. For the crime of Ham, the curse was entailed on his posterity by Canaan [m]. Some think that the curse extended to all the posterity of Ham, and that Canaan is particularly mentioned, because this history being immediately written for confirming the faith of the Israelites, the prophecy of Noah was to them a prelude of victory over the Canaanites, and of the possession of their land. Others suppose that Canaan was singled out by the Patriarch, under the influence of the Spirit of inspiration, as having been immediately concerned with Ham in the crime which he committed. But of this we have no evidence whatsoever. Admitting it to be consistent with justice to punish children for the iniquities of their fathers, God, in his adorable sovereignty, might entail the curse in a special manner upon one branch of the posterity of Ham. It has been said, that the curse was not "pronounced upon Canaan for his father "Ham's transgression;" that "such arbitrary "proceedings are contrary to all our ideas of the "divine

[m] Gen. ix. 25.

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" divine perfections;" that " the curſe upon Ca-
" naan was properly a curſe upon the Canaanites;
" that God foreſeeing the wickedneſs of this peo-
" ple, (which began in their father Ham, and
" greatly increaſed in this branch of his family),
" commiſſioned Noah to pronounce a curſe upon
" them, and to devote them to the ſervitude and
" miſery, which their more than common vices
" and iniquities would deſerve;" and that " this
" account was plainly written by Moſes, for the
" encouragement of the Iſraelites [n]," &c.

It cannot well be doubted, that the curſe eſpecially reſpected the poſterity of Canaan, and that it was recorded for encouraging the Iſraelites to obey the command of God, by entering into their land. But we certainly do violence to the language of Scripture, and aſcribe the greateſt impropriety of conduct to the Spirit of inſpiration, if we deny that the curſe upon Canaan was meant as a puniſhment of the crime of Ham. Such is the connexion of the hiſtory, as neceſſarily to imply this. " And Ham the father of Canaan ſaw
" the nakedneſs of his father, and told his two
" brethren without.—And Noah awoke from his
" wine, and knew," as would ſeem, by immediate revelation, " what his younger ſon had done
" unto him. And he ſaid, Curſed be Canaan; a
" ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be unto his bre-
" thren [o]." We are not merely to conſider the deſign with which this account was " written by
" Moſes," but the deſign with which the curſe was

[n] Biſhop Newton on the Prophecies, diſſert. 1. [o] Gen. ix. 22. 24, 25.

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was primarily pronounced by Noah under the impulſe of the Spirit. And ſurely nothing can be more plain, than that the curſe was denounced againſt the poſterity of Ham, as the puniſhment of his iniquity. It ſeems totally incongruous to the character of "the Spirit of revelation," who is alſo the "Spirit of wiſdom," to connect, in the language of prophecy, the puniſhment of the poſterity of Ham with the crime of their anceſtor, if there was no connexion of a judicial nature. We do not perceive the propriety of Noah's "pro-"nouncing a curſe" on this occaſion, if it had no preſent effect. There is, indeed, juſt as much reaſon for ſuppoſing, that Shem and Japhet were perſonally excluded from the bleſſing, as that the curſe had no immediate relation to Ham, but wholly reſpected his poſterity.

Among the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, who were cut off by the deſtroying angel, there were doubtleſs many who had never ſinned in their own perſons. They were immediately puniſhed for the unbelief and obduracy of their parents. The children of Achan periſhed with him [p]. No one, who believes revelation, can doubt the account given us of the puniſhment of the perfidy of Saul to the Gibeonites, firſt on the nation, and afterwards on his poſterity. Nor can it be doubted, that God approved of the ſevere ſentence paſſed, at the inſtance of the Gibeonites, on the ſeven ſons of Saul. For it is ſaid, that, in conſequence of their execution, "God was entreated "for

[p] Joſh. vii. 24.

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"for the land [q]." Now, there is not the leaſt evidence, that any of them concurred in the cruel conduct of their progenitor. Yet the deſignation of a "bloody houſe" is transferred to them, becauſe "*he* ſlew the Gibeonites." We muſt believe that God acted with perfect equity in the whole of the tranſaction. But there is a depth in this judgment which we cannot pretend to fathom.

God hath dealt in this very manner with his own people. He ſubjected the child, that David had begotten in adultery, to death; and declared, that the ſword ſhould never depart from his houſe, becauſe he had murdered Uriah [r].

Theſe facts, recorded by the Spirit of God, are perfectly conſonant to many doctrinal teſtimonies contained in Scripture on this ſubject. Speaking of the wicked, Job ſaith; "God layeth up his "iniquity for his children [s]." He compares it to thoſe treaſures, which men are eager to amaſs for their poſterity. Thus Jeremiah complains, as perſonating the afflicted Church of God; "Our fa-"thers have ſinned and are not, and we have "borne their iniquities [t]." Elſewhere he conſiders this branch of the divine conduct as ground of adoration; "Thou—recompenſeſt the iniquity "of the fathers into the boſom of their children "after them: the great, the mighty God, the "LORD of Hoſts is his name [u]."

Although men were to diſregard the language of Scripture, their own obſervation would ſupply them

q 2 Sam. xxi. 1.—9. 14. r 2 Sam. xii. 10. 14. s Job xxi. 19.
t Lam v. 7. u Jer. xxxii. 18.

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them with ſufficient evidence of this truth. Are not children ſubjected to poverty and want, in conſequence of the prodigality of their parents? Do they not derive from them peculiar diſeaſes, which are the natural conſequences of vice? Do they not often endure great and long-continued ſufferings from ſuch diſeaſes? Do not theſe frequently iſſue in premature death? Now, unleſs it can be proved, that ſuffering, or even death, is in itſelf no puniſhment; it muſt be admitted, that children are puniſhed, by ſuch hereditary diſeaſes, for the crimes of their parents, although they have had no hand in them.

God viſits none in this manner, who are otherwiſe abſolutely innocent. When treated as guilty, in being ſubjected to ſuffering in conſequence of the ſins of their more immediate anceſtors, they are primarily viewed as tranſgreſſors in their firſt parent. Thus, indeed, God vindicates his juſtice in the imputation of Adam's firſt ſin. While many object to this doctrine, as if it were inconſiſtent with the rectitude of the divine nature, that men ſhould ſuffer for what was not their perſonal act; let them ſhew how, according to this reaſoning, it is juſt with God to viſit the iniquities of more immediate progenitors on their poſterity: or let them both ſet aſide the evidence of inconteſtable facts, and fairly deny the truth of the Sacred Hiſtory in this reſpect, that they may appear in their real character. Alas! that there is ſo much refined deiſm among us; that ſo many profeſs to believe the truth of revelation, who

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notwithſtanding diſcover the inſincerity of their profeſſion, by trampling on the authority of the Spirit of inſpiration, when his teſtimony oppoſes their own imaginations!

11. The fathers are, according to this procedure, puniſhed *in* their ſeed. Children are viewed as exiſting in their parents, long before they have actual being; as Levi paid tithes in the loins of Abraham. In like manner, parents are viewed as exiſting in their children, even after they have themſelves left the ſtage of life. This is evident from the very manner in which the bleſſing, or the curſe, was often pronounced. Shem and Japhet were bleſſed in their poſterity, Ham was curſed in his: for both the bleſſing and the curſe had a ſpecial reſpect to ſucceeding generations. When Jacob received the bleſſing, it had alſo a peculiar reference to his deſcendants; while Eſau was juſtly puniſhed by God, not only in his perſon, but in his poſterity, becauſe of his profaneneſs in ſelling his birthright. The bleſſings prophetically pronounced by Jacob, on his ſons, immediately reſpected their offspring. Yet the bleſſing of Joſeph is expreſſed as if it had been merely perſonal: "The bleſſings of thy father "have prevailed above the bleſſings of my proge-"nitors;—they ſhall be on the head of Joſeph, "and on the crown of the head of him that was "ſeparate from his brethren." The ſame obſervation holds true as to the other bleſſings. The patriarch views the various tribes as preſent in the

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the perſons of their progenitors; and the ſacred hiſtorian gives us the very ſame repreſentation: "All theſe are the twelve tribes of Iſrael: and "this is it that their father ſpake unto them, and "bleſſed them; every one according to his bleſ-"ſing he bleſſed them[v]." Reuben is puniſhed in the lot of the tribe which was to ſpring from him: "Unſtable as water, thou ſhalt not excel; be-"cauſe thou wenteſt up to thy father's bed, then "defiledſt thou it: he went up to my couch." Simeon and Levi are puniſhed in their ſeed. Becauſe "inſtruments of cruelty were in their ha-"bitations," their father ſaid; "I will divide "them in Jacob, and ſcatter them in Iſrael[w]." The ſtain, attending the diſperſion of Levi, was indeed afterwards in great meaſure wiped away; as God choſe this tribe to the ſervice of the tabernacle and temple, and "ſcattered them in Ja-"cob" as inſtructors of the people. But as originally expreſſed, it was rather a curſe than a bleſſing; and Levi was himſelf puniſhed in the denunciation, eſpecially as he had no intimation of the bleſſed iſſue.

This puniſhment is inflicted in various ways and degrees. Parents ſometimes ſee the vengeance executed, before their own death. Thus it was with Eli. He "honoured his ſons above" God; for when they "made themſelves vile, he re-"ſtrained them not:" whence he is himſelf charged with kicking at God's ſacrifice and offering[x]. It was therefore foretold concerning his two ſons;

v Gen. xlix. 26. 28. w Ver. 3.—7. x 1 Sam. ii. 29; iii. 13.

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"In one day they ſhall die both of them:" and his life was ſpared only that he might ſee the completion of this awful threatening, as a ſign of the future infliction of the hereditary judgments denounced againſt his houſe. For the LORD had "told him, that he would judge his houſe for "ever, for the iniquity which he knew,"[1] and, by giving no proper check to it, virtually approved. Theſe judgments, although properly affecting his poſterity, are all deſcribed as directed againſt himſelf; whether inflicted during his own life, or in ſucceeding generations: "I will per-"form *againſt Eli* all things which I have ſpoken "concerning his houſe: when I begin, I will "alſo make an end [y]."

The young generation of Iſrael, although not like their fathers, bore their iniquity. Their ſufferings, however, were eſpecially meant for the puniſhment of their rebellious parents. For the children ſuffered, only till that generation was extinct, which had come out of Egypt. This is evident from the ſentence pronounced by their God: "As for you, your carcaſes, they ſhall fall in this "wilderneſs. And your children ſhall wander in "the wilderneſs forty years, and *bear your whore-*"*doms*," that is, the puniſhment of them, "until "your carcaſes be waſted in the wilderneſs [z]."

Parents, although they ſee not the vengeance themſelves, are ſometimes puniſhed in their ſeed, by ſeeing its certainty in the threatening. When Ahab had, by impiety and murder, got poſſeſſion of

y 1 Sam. iii. 12, 13. z Numb. xiv. 32, 33.

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of the vineyard of Naboth, God ſent his ſervant Elijah to inform him, that he would bring evil upon him, and take away his poſterity, and cut off every male from his houſe. But, in conſequence of Ahab's humbling himſelf, he is informed, that God would not bring the evil in his days [a]. The total deſtruction, brought on the houſe of Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat, is repreſented as the puniſhment of *his* iniquity. For Baaſha "ſmote all the houſe of Jeroboam, he left not to "Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had de-"ſtroyed him, according unto the ſaying of the "LORD, which he ſpake by his ſervant Ahijah "the Shilonite; becauſe of the ſins of Jeroboam "which he ſinned, and which he made Iſrael "ſin [b]."

Nor is this viſitation confined to the wicked. In this manner hath God often teſtified his diſpleaſure with his own children. Solomon was aſſured that, becauſe of his apoſtacy, the kingdom ſhould be rent from his ſon. Although this judgment was not to be inflicted in his own days, yet as it was procured by his iniquity, it is ſpoken of as inflicted on himſelf: "I will ſurely rend the "kingdom *from thee*, and will give it to thy ſer-"vant. Notwithſtanding, in thy days I will not "do it, for David thy father's ſake: but I will "rend it out of the hand of thy ſon [c]."

Hezekiah, after his miraculous deliverance from Sennacherib, and from a mortal diſeaſe, "ren-"dered not again according to the benefit done

a 1 Kings xxi. 21. 29. b 1 Kings xv. 29, 30. c 1 Kings xi. 11, 12.

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" unto him." When the ambaſſadors of the king of Babylon came to congratulate him on his recovery, he ſhewed them all his armour, and his treaſures. This at firſt view might ſeem a blameleſs action; a piece of common civility to ſtrangers, who had come from a diſtant country, or of reſpect to the ſovereign who ſent them. But, in judging of actions, the divine eye is eſpecially fixed on the intention. In this reſpect Hezekiah failed. It is therefore ſaid; " God left him, to " try him, that he might know all that was in his " heart." And it is declared, that " his heart " was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon " him." Either he valued himſelf too much on account of the ſignal tokens of divine favour he had received, as if they had been merited by his righteous conduct; or truſted in his riches, as if they could have proved the means of his defence: or perhaps he offended in both reſpects. Whatever might be the particular ground of diſpleaſure, God declared by the prophet Iſaiah, that his ſons ſhould be carried away captive, and be " eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Wrath was *upon him*, although it came not in his days[d]. For even the ſincere repentance of the ſervants of God, after great tranſgreſſions, has not prevented, although it has ſometimes delayed, the judicial viſitation. As to perſonal guilt and puniſhment, the ſin of David was taken away; but not the puniſhment as it reſpected his family. God teſtified his diſpleaſure with him, as he had formerly

d 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26. 31.; Iſa. xxxix. 7, 8.

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formerly done with reſpect to Eli; when he ſwore that the iniquity of his houſe ſhould "not be pur-"ged with ſacrifice nor offering for ever[e]." He hath obſerved this line of conduct in various inſtances; that he might give the ſtrongeſt teſtimony as to the evil and demerit of ſin, and his infinite and irreconcilable hatred of it, although the tranſgreſſor himſelf was the object of his ſpecial and unchangeable love.

It may be ſaid perhaps, that it is eaſily conceivable how parents could thus be puniſhed in their ſeed, when God was pleaſed to communicate his will by a ſpecial revelation to the individual; although he ſhould not himſelf live to ſee the completion of the threatening: but that matters now ſtand on a very different footing, as no ſuch extraordinary intimations can be expected. Let it be remembered, however, that "whatſoever "was written aforetime, was written for our learn-"ing." Although, therefore, there be now no particular intimation of the divine will by the Spirit of prophecy, the threatenings and puniſhments, recorded in Scripture, are warnings to us of what we may juſtly expect, if we go on in our treſpaſſes.

This is one of the means which God employs for maintaining his moral government: and we muſt admire his wiſdom in the choice of it. Such is the love which the moſt of parents bear to their children, that they would rather ſuffer in their own perſons, than that they ſhould ſuffer. To

[e] 1 Sam. iii. 14.

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how many ſufferings, indeed, do they cheerfully expoſe themſelves, for their preſervation and comfort! Thus, as has been obſerved by the Biſhop of Meaux, "God ſhews parents, that according "to the ſecret order of his judgments, he conti-"nues their rewards or puniſhments after their "death; and holds them in ſubmiſſion to his "laws by their deareſt tie, that is, by the tie of "their children [f]."

III. God viſits the iniquities of fathers upon their children, eſpecially when they take the *ſame*, or *ſimilar courſes*. To ſuch the commination, annexed to the ſecond precept of the law, immediately refers: "I the LORD thy God am "a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fa-"thers upon the children, unto the third and "fourth generation of them that *hate* me [g]." When God here threatens to *viſit*, the language does not ſimply ſignify to puniſh, *iniquity;* but denotes puniſhment even after a long, or a conſiderable delay. Although men may ſuppoſe that he takes no notice of the ſins committed againſt him, or that he has in effect forgotten them; he will eventually ſhew that they have been accurately obſerved, and that he hath been treaſuring up vengeance. We have already ſeen, that God, without any injury to his juſtice, may puniſh children for the ſins of their fathers, although not chargeable with the ſame ſins; becauſe he ſtill views them as ſinners. But the threatening referred

[f] Boſſuet's Univerſal Hiſt. Vol. i. Part 2. Sect. 4. [g] Exod. xx. 5.

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ferred to marks the more ordinary tenor of his procedure. Succeeding generations are conſidered as manifeſting their hatred of God, by continuing in a courſe of iniquity. They may do it in different degrees. Sometimes, by purſuing the very ſame track. The Lord complains of his ancient people; "Even from the days of your fa-"thers, ye are gone away from mine ordinan-"ces[h]." Thus the iniquity, for which God viſits, is not merely that of their fathers; but their own, becauſe they have imitated their wicked example. At other times they become worſe than their anceſtors. Their ſins, although of the ſame kind, are more aggravated. The Jews, under the Old Teſtament, killed the prophets: their poſterity were the murderers of "the holy and juſt "One." Often, the children do not actually commit the ſame crimes, but others of a ſimilar nature which diſcover the ſame ſpirit. Or, they teſtify their approbation of the deeds of their fathers, by juſtifying, even while they do not imitate, their conduct. "This their way "is their folly; yet their poſterity approve their "ſayings[i]." Perhaps their language is; "Where-"fore hath the LORD pronounced all this great "evil againſt us? or what is our iniquity[k]?" But poſterity may be ſubjected to the puniſhment of the ſins of their progenitors, although they do not practically imitate them, nor juſtify their conduct. The jealous God views them as approving, if they do not acknowledge, expreſsly condemn

h Mal. iii. 7. i Pſal. xlix. 13. k Jer. xvi. 10.

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demn and mourn over, the iniquities of their fathers. Hence he addreſſes his Church in this manner; "Have ye forgotten the wickedneſs of "your fathers, and the wickedneſs of the kings of "Judah, and the wickedneſs of their wives, and "your own wickedneſs, and the wickedneſs of your "wives?—They are not humbled, neither have "they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my ſta-"tutes that I ſet before you, and before your fathers. "Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God "of Iſrael, Behold, I will ſet my face againſt "you for evil, and to cut off all Judah[1]."

In the addition to the precept, this viſitation is mentioned, as extending "unto the third and "fourth generation." But we are not to view this as an abſolute limitation; or to conclude, that God reſtricts the puniſhment of the ſins of anceſtors to any one particular generation. The contrary appears from the indefinite manner in which the ſpecification is made. This puniſhment extends ſometimes to the third, and ſometimes to the fourth generation. In other inſtances, it is carried farther. When the Jews crucified the Lord of glory, they cried out, "His blood be up-"on us, and on our children:" and this awful curſe hath been entailed on their poſterity for more than ſeventeen centuries, or nearly ſixty generations. All this time, they have not only been "ſhut up in unbelief," but caſt over the hedge of the vineyard, and ſet up to all nations as "an "aſtoniſhment, a hiſſing, and a curſe." The quarrel

[1] Jer. xliv. 9—11.

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rel at times is not profecuted even to the fourth generation.

This ſpecification ſeems to be made, however, that the threatening might have a keener edge to the heart of a parent. As many live to ſee the third and fourth generation of their own deſcendants, it ſignifies that even the bleſſing of "ſeeing "their children's children [m]," ſhall to them be converted into a curſe; as they ſhall be preſerved in life, only to ſee their own ſin in the puniſhment of their beloved offspring. In this ſenſe is the language of Job, concerning the wicked man, verified; "God layeth up his iniquity for his "children: he rewardeth him, and he ſhall know "it. His eyes ſhall ſee his deſtruction, and he "ſhall drink of the wrath of the Almighty [n]."

This limitation alſo marks the remarkable difference between the exerciſe of judgment and of mercy, in the divine procedure; and ſhows how much "mercy rejoiceth over judgment." For a promiſe is added, as a bleſſed counterpart to the threatening, as a gracious encouragement to children to cleave to the God of their fathers:— "And ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them "that love me, and keep my commandments." But while the threatening flows from juſtice, the promiſe is wholly the fruit of grace.

Whereas the viſitation is continued, in many inſtances, to the third or fourth generation; in others, it is delayed from one generation to another, to a third, or a fourth. The arch-rebel ſeems

m Pſal. cxxviii. 6. n Job xxi. 19, 20.

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ſeems to paſs with impunity; and the vengeance primarily, and, as might ſeem, chiefly merited by him, overtakes his poſterity. This muſt often be principally aſcribed to divine ſovereignty. In other caſes, a particular reaſon is aſſigned for this procedure. Ahab "ſold himſelf to work evil in the "ſight of the LORD." Yet becauſe he "humbled "himſelf," in conſequence of the threatening, although a ſtranger to true repentance, God would not bring the evil in his days, but delayed it till thoſe of his ſon [o]. In the ſecond generation alſo, God puniſhed the iniquity of Baaſha king of Iſrael. Then Zimri, according to the prediction of Jehu the prophet, deſtroyed all the houſe of Baaſha, "for all the ſins of Baaſha, and the ſins "of Elah his ſon [p]." He viſited the iniquities of two generations at once. His vengeance againſt Jeroboam, the ſon of Nebat, "who made Iſrael "to ſin," was in like manner delayed till the ſecond generation [q]. A longer reſpite was given to the family of Jehu. "The LORD ſaid unto him, "Becauſe thou haſt done well, in executing that "which is right in mine eyes, and haſt done unto "the houſe of Ahab according to all that was in "mine heart, thy children of the fourth genera-"tion ſhall ſit upon the throne of Iſrael." And the truth of the prediction was manifeſted by the event [r]. But it deſerves our attention, that, although he had externally done all that was in God's heart as to the vengeance denounced againſt the

o 1 Kings xxi. 19. 29. p Chap. xvi. 7. 9. 13. q Chap. xiv. 10.; xv. 27.—29. r 2 Kings x. 30.; xv. 12.

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the houſe of Ahab, on which account his poſterity were ſo long preſerved on the throne; yet as he acted in this matter without any upright intentions, and as he turned aſide to the ſins of Jeroboam, all this ſeems to be only the exerciſe of divine forbearance. He fulfilled God's purpoſe; yet becauſe he acted from ſiniſter motives, God views him as the murderer of his maſter, and long afterwards "maketh inquiſition for blood." His great-great-grandſon is murdered by Shallum the ſon of Jabeſh; and thus, according to the prophecy of Hoſea, God "avenged the blood of "Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu [s]." Baaſha had in like manner been the inſtrument of the predicted vengeance againſt the houſe of Jeroboam; yet God denounces vengeance againſt Baaſha and his houſe, "becauſe he killed" Nadab the ſon of Jeroboam [t]. Here let us admire the wiſdom, the holineſs and the juſtice of our God; who employs wicked men to accompliſh his purpoſes of vengeance; while the ſin is wholly their own, and expoſes them to ſevere puniſhment, which ſooner or later ſhall certainly be inflicted.

Nebuchadnezzar, although accompliſhing the divine purpoſe againſt Judah, ſubjected himſelf to "the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of "his temple." Therefore it was threatened; "I "will puniſh the king of Babylon, and that na-"tion, ſaith the LORD, for their iniquity [u]." But as God meant to try his people for ſeventy years in Babylon, the vengeance was delayed till the reign

s Hoſ. i. 4. t 1 Kings xvi. 7. u Jer. xxv. 12.

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reign of Belſhazzar his grandſon. Therefore it was predicted; "All nations ſhall ſerve him, and "his ſon, and his ſon's ſon, until the very time "of his land come; and then many nations and "great kings ſhall ſerve themſelves of him[v]." They ſerved themſelves *of him* in the puniſhment of his poſterity. Hence alſo is the command given; "Prepare ſlaughter for his children, for the "iniquity of their fathers[w]." To ſhew in the cleareſt point of view, that this puniſhment was peculiarly "the vengeance of his temple," God ſo ordered it in his providence, and he hath left it on record in the Sacred Hiſtory, that it was on that very night in which the holy veſſels of the houſe of God were profaned, that Babylon was taken and Belſhazzar ſlain[x].

Thus alſo it appears, that while ſlaughter was prepared for Belſhazzar "for the iniquity of his "fathers," this iniquity was viewed by divine juſtice as his own. He formally entered into fellowſhip with his grandfather, by his impiety in defiling the ſacred veſſels of the temple; and ſet the ſeal of his approbation to all that had been done againſt the houſe and heritage of JEHOVAH. God bore with him till he thus ſerved himſelf heir to the guilt of Nebuchadnezzar; but then the exerciſe of divine long-ſuffering was at an end. It has been ſuppoſed that this was the feaſt, annually celebrated by the Babylonians, in honour of their great god Bel. They at any rate mingled with it their falſe religion. For while they

v Jer. xxvii. 7. w Iſa. xiv. 21. x Dan. v. 1—4. 28. 30.

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they drank out of the holy veſſels of the temple of JEHOVAH, they "praiſed the gods of ſilver and "gold[y]. It ſeems moſt probable, that theſe veſſels had been brought forth as a trophy of victory over the true God; and that Belſhazzar praiſed his falſe deities, by aſcribing to them a ſuperiority of power over that God who had been worſhipped at Jeruſalem, the ſpoils of whoſe temple now adorned the table of his riot.

It may ſeem ſurpriſing, that the individual "who hath made the earth to tremble,—who "hath made the world as a wilderneſs,—and hath "not opened the houſe of his priſoners," that he who hath been the original and principal cauſe of the controverſy, ſhould go to his grave in peace; and that the vengeance ſhould be executed on his poſterity of the third, fourth or fifth generation, although perhaps they have never ſold themſelves to work wickedneſs like him. This is indeed one of the deep things of God. But there are various conſiderations which tend to remove the difficulty.

When God ſpares the original culprit, he hath generally ſome great *providential end* to ſerve by this conduct. When he ſpared Jeroboam, it was for judgment to the houſe of David. He ſuffered Nebuchadnezzar to die in peace, for accompliſhing his purpoſe in the eſtabliſhment of the firſt great monarchy, as well as for prolonging the viſitation on rebellious Judah, and the other nations of the earth. Neither of theſe deſigns could have

[y] Dan. v. 3, 4.

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have been fulfilled, had the vengeance come in its full extent in his days. It muſt alſo be remembered, that this proud and ambitious monarch was perſonally viſited for ſeven years by an unexampled judgment. He, who had "made the "world as a wilderneſs," had "a beaſt's heart "given unto him,—was driven from men, and "had his dwelling with the beaſts of the field [z]."

Although the ſins of poſterity ſhould not equal thoſe of their anceſtors in atrocity, there is notwithſtanding a conſtant *accumulation* of guilt. Sin is repreſented as a debt; and the original debt is greatly increaſed by the additions made in ſucceſſive generations. The men of this world are well acquainted with the doctrine of accumulation, as it reſpects earthly property. But alas! they pay no regard to the accumulation of guilt; which expoſes them to that awful retribution threatened by the Judge of the univerſe: "Be-"hold, it is written before me, I will not keep "ſilence, but will recompence, even recompence, "into their boſom, your iniquities, and the ini-"quities of your fathers together, ſaith the LORD: "—therefore will I meaſure their former work "into their boſom [a]." To this purpoſe Moſes ſaid to the young generation, who had been born in the wilderneſs; "Behold, ye are riſen up in your "fathers' ſtead, an increaſe of ſinful men, to aug-"ment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward "Iſrael [b]."

As

z Dan. iv. 16. 22. 33. a Iſa. lxv. 6, 7. b Num. xxxii. 14.

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As this guilt is increaſed, it is alſo *aggravated*. If thoſe, who walk in the evil ways of their fathers, are favoured with a revelation of the divine will, their guilt is aggravated from the very circumſtance of their having theſe iniquities before their eyes. For theſe, in their connexion with the threatenings of God's word, ought to have been viewed as beacons, ſet up in providence, for deterring them from a ſimilar courſe. Therefore, the evil example of anceſtors, who enjoyed the outward means of grace, ſo far from being admitted as an extenuation of the guilt of their poſterity, is ſtill repreſented by God as enhancing it. "Thus ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſ-"ſions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn "away the puniſhment thereof; becauſe they "have deſpiſed the law of the LORD,—and their "lies cauſed them to err, after the which their "fathers have walked [c]." The guilt of Babylon was greatly increaſed by the reſidence of God's people in that land. "We would have healed "Babylon," ſay they, "but ſhe is not healed [d]."

It is a ſtill higher aggravation, if God has not only threatened, but *executed* his *vengeance* on their fathers, for theſe very ſins. Of this the hiſtory of Iſrael affords ample illuſtration. Thus God ſpeaks by Ezekiel: "Are ye polluted after "the manner of your fathers? and commit ye "whoredoms after their abominations?—Like as "I pleaded with your fathers,—ſo will I plead "with you [e]." There is no evidence that Bel-

c Amos ii. 4. d Jer. li. 9. e Ezek. xx. 30. 36.

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ſhazzar had perſonally committed ſo many crimes as his anceſtor Nebuchadnezzar. But in this reſpect was his guilt peculiarly aggravated. Although he *knew* the awful judgment that had been brought on Nebuchadnezzar, his heart, ſo far from being *humbled*, was ſo *lifted up*, that he preſumed to profane the holy veſſels of the temple of JEHOVAH. The vengeance, therefore, could be no longer delayed. The life of the king, and the exiſtence of the kingdom, terminated together [f].

When God has given no practical teſtimonies of his diſpleaſure with wicked predeceſſors, his very *forbearance* proves an occaſion of the aggravation of the guilt of poſterity, if they either continue in their wicked courſes, or are not humbled on account of them. All who "deſpiſe the riches "of his—forbearance and long-ſuffering,—treaſure up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of "wrath [g]." This conduct, on the part of the Iſraelites, is frequently exhibited as a ſpecial aggravation of their guilt, and as both haſtening and augmenting their puniſhment. After a particular enumeration of the mercies manifeſted towards them, it is added; "Yet they turned back, and "dealt unfaithfully like their fathers.—When "God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Iſrael [h]."

The caſe is ſimilar, when long-ſuffering hath been mingled with all the tokens of divine diſpleaſure; or when God hath "often turned his "anger

f Dan. v. 19.—23. 28. 30. g Rom. ii. 4, 5. h Pſal. lxxviii. 57.—59.

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"anger away, and hath not ſtirred up all his "wrath." Thus Nehemiah confeſſes the guilt of his people: "Our fathers dealt proudly, and har- "dened their necks, and hearkened not to thy "commandments.—Yet thou in thy manifold mer- "cies forſookeſt them not in the wilderneſs.— "Moreover, thou gaveſt them kingdoms and na- "tions.—Nevertheleſs, they were diſobedient and "rebelled againſt thee.—Therefore thou deliver- "edſt them into the hand of their enemies.— "Yet many years didſt thou forbear them, and "teſtifiedſt againſt them by thy Spirit in thy pro- "phets; yet would they not give ear; therefore "gaveſt thou them into the hand of the people of "the lands[i]."

IV. There are *ſome ſins* which God more remarkably viſits on ſucceeding generations, than others. The firſt we ſhall mention is idolatry, or the corruption of his worſhip and ordinances. Hence we find this threatening appended to the ſecond commandment. God is eſpecially jealous as to his ſervice. He proſecuted his quarrel with the ſeed of Jeroboam, becauſe in this reſpect he had "made Iſrael to ſin." Whatever excuſes men may offer for apoſtacy from the true worſhip of God, he accounts all idolaters *haters* of himſelf; for this is the character given to thoſe who break this precept.

As this threatening illuſtrates the heinous guilt of idolatry, we may ſee the propriety of connect-

[i] Neh. ix. 16.—27 30. See alſo Ezek. xx. 1.—36.

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ing it with the ſecond precept in another reſpect; becauſe children are ſo very apt to follow the example of their parents in religion. How often do men give this as an apology for a falſe, or what they acknowledge to be a corrupt religion; how often is it employed as an argument even againſt impartial examination, that their religion is the ſame which their fathers profeſſed?

Breach of covenant is another ſin which God eſpecially puniſhes in the ſame manner. Zedekiah had entered into a covenant, to give his ſubjects that liberty which God had appointed in the law. But he and his princes afterwards tranſgreſſed it. Wherefore the LORD denounced vengeance againſt them; "—Zedekiah king of Ju-"dah and his princes will I give into the hand of "their enemies." This vengeance was executed in a moſt affecting manner. The king of Babylon ſlew the ſons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and then he put them out [k]; as if God would ſuffer this wretched parent to retain his ſight, only till he had witneſſed the mercileſs extermination of the fruit of his body.

The ſhedding of the blood of his ſaints is a ſin that God remarkably viſits on ſucceeding generations. All innocent blood defiles the land in which it is ſhed. If men ſhould make no inquiſition for it, God will. It hath been a thouſand times remarked, even by thoſe who know not the truth, that the providence of God is more ſignally ſeen in the diſcovery and puniſhment of murder, than

k Jer. xxxiv. 21.; xxxix. 6, 7.

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than with reſpect to any other crime. The barbarous heathens of Melita, when they ſaw the viper faſten on Paul's hand, had only one opinion about the matter; and this they formed without heſitation. "No doubt," ſaid they, "this man "is a murderer, whom though he hath eſcaped "the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live[l]." Nor is it ſurpriſing that God ſhould eſpecially proſecute this ſin. We find the reaſon of this, in the law given to all the ſons of Noah, on the reſtoration of the world. He adjudges to death every murderer, becauſe "in the image of God "made he man[m]." This crime is an attack on God himſelf, in his only viſible image in this lower world. But when it is committed in the way of perſecution, it is ſtill more heinous in his ſight. There is a double attack on the Majeſty of heaven; on his image, as it ſtill imperfectly remains, in conſequence of the firſt creation, and alſo as reſtored by the ſecond. Nay, when men are "perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake," God knows that his image in the new creation, is the very ground of the perſecution.

Need we wonder, then, that "the death of his "ſaints" ſhould be eſpecially "precious in his "ſight?" Their immediate perſecutors may ſeem to eſcape; but the guilt deſcends to ſucceeding generations. God deals with perſons, families, ſocieties and nations, in a way peculiar to himſelf. There is a certain appointed meaſure of iniquity that he allows them to fill up, before he call them

l Acts xxviii. 4. m Gen. ix. 6.

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to account. When he promiſed Canaan to Abraham and his ſeed, he did not give them immediate poſſeſſion. They had to wait for about four hundred years for the accompliſhment of the promiſe; becauſe "the iniquity of the Amorites was "not yet full [n]." Thus God deals with wicked families. When they have perſecuted his ſervants, he fulfils his threatening; "They ſhall "judge thee,—after the manner of women that "ſhed blood; becauſe—blood is in their hands. "—They ſhall ſlay their ſons and their daugh-"ters [o]." In this manner did God viſit the blood of his ſervant Naboth on the houſe of Ahab. For the crime of this wicked prince was not ſimply murder, but perſecution. He ſhed the blood of Naboth, for his ſtrict adherence to the divine precept, in refuſing to ſell, or to exchange, his inheritance [p]. The vengeance overtook Jehoram in the portion of Naboth, in that very field which his father had procured for himſelf by the murder of a righteous man.

So ſtriking was this diſpenſation of providence, that it forcibly brought to the recollection of the wicked Jehu the prediction delivered by Elijah, which he repeated to his captain in theſe words; "Surely I have ſeen yeſterday the blood of Na-"both, and the blood of his ſons, ſaith the LORD; "and I will requite thee in this plat, ſaith the "LORD [q]." Manaſſeh "ſhed innocent blood very "much, till he had filled Jeruſalem from one "end

n Gen. xv. 16. o Ezek. xxiii. 45.—47. Lev. xxv. 23. 25.; Numb. xxxvi. 6.—9.
p 1 Kings xxi. 2, 3. comp.
q 2 Kings ix. 21. 24.—26.

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"end to another [r]." This God visited on the third generation of his posterity; and not on them only, but on the whole nation. For as they had suffered themselves to be seduced by him, "to do more evil than did the nations "whom the LORD destroyed before the children "of Israel [s];" God viewed them as having made the blood-guiltiness of Manasseh their own, because they used no proper means for the prevention or restraint of this atrocious wickedness. The Chaldeans were sent against Judah "to destroy "it;" and this is the reason assigned: "Surely "at the commandment of the LORD came this "upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, "for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that "he did; and also for the innocent blood that "he shed,—which the LORD would not par-"don [t]."

Thus did the Jews, who rejected the Son of God, "fill up the measure of their fathers," as he forewarned them: "Behold, I send unto you "prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some "of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of "them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and "persecute from city to city: that upon you may "come all the righteous blood shed upon the "earth, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of "Zacharias.—Verily I say unto you, all these "things shall come upon this generation [u]." Many of their predecessors had been severely punish-

r 2 Kings xxi. 16. s 2 Kings xxi. 9. t 2 Kings xxiii. 26.; xxiv. 3, 4. See also Jer. xv. 3, 4.

u Mat. xxiii. 32. 34.—36.

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ed for this very crime. But the punishment due to them as a nation had been still in a great measure deferred. This generation killed the *heir*, and thus explicitly set the seal of their approbation to all that their fathers had done to the *servants* [x]. They murdered the great Prophet of the Church, and thus practically vindicated the conduct of their ancestors, in shedding the blood of his messengers. They killed "the just One," and brought on themselves the guilt of all the righteous blood formerly shed. God was therefore to visit them with as much severity, as if he had never before made inquisition for blood. As their guilt was accumulated from one generation to another, their punishment was to be unexampled. He would prosecute his controversy with them, with as great severity as was possible, without utterly destroying them as a people. Hence the apostle Paul gives this account of their sin and punishment: They "both killed the Lord "Jesus, and their own prophets, and have perse-"cuted us;—to fill up their sins alway: for," or therefore "the wrath is come upon them to the "uttermost [y]." *

A

x Mat. xxi. 35.—41. y 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

* The observations of a very eminent writer, on the parallel passage, Luke xi. 50, 51., deserve our attention. "There is in this commination an appearance of severity beyond the rule established, Exod. xx. 5.—Here the vengeance and punishment due unto the sins of an hundred generations, is threatened to be inflicted on that which was present.—The case here is *particular*. That in the command respects the common case of all false worshippers, and their posterity; but this respects the persecution unto blood and death of the true worshippers of God. Now, though God

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A ſimilar account is given of the guilt and viſitation of Rome. In anſwer to the cry of "the "ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of "God," during the heathen perſecutions, it is ſaid, that "they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſea-"ſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their "brethren, that ſhould be killed as they were, "ſhould be fulfilled [z]." This undoubtedly reſpects thoſe that were to ſuffer under Rome antichriſtian. The guilt is repreſented as one; ſo alſo

God be very much provoked with the ſins of falſe worſhippers, yet he can either bear with them, or paſs over their ſins with leſſer puniſhments, or at leaſt for a long ſeaſon; but when they come to perſecution, and the blood of them who worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth, in his appointed ſeaſon he will not ſpare them; their own, and the iniquities of their predeceſſors, ſhall be avenged on them, which will be the end of the antichriſtian church ſtate, after all its preſent triumph.

"All thoſe who, from the beginning of the world, ſuffered unto blood on the account of religion, ſuffered *in the cauſe of Chriſt*, for their faith in him, and confeſſion of him; namely, as he was promiſed unto the Church. Unto him and his office did Abel, *by faith*, bear teſtimony, in the bloody ſacrifice that he offered. So it is ſaid that Moſes, in his danger for killing the Egyptian, bare "the reproach of Chriſt," becauſe he did it in faith of the promiſed ſeed, which was Chriſt. They were therefore all ſlain in the cauſe of Chriſt; and whereas this generation was to ſlay Chriſt himſelf, and did ſo, they did therein approve of, and juſtify all the blood that was ſhed from the foundation of the world; and made themſelves juſtly liable unto the puniſhment due unto it. Hence our Saviour tells them †, that they, the men of that generation, ſlew Zechariah, who was actually ſlain many hundred years before.

"——When a ſinful church and people have paſſed the utmoſt bounds of divine patience and forbearance, they ſhall fall into ſuch *abominable crying ſins* and provocations, as ſhall render the utmoſt vengeance beneath their deſerts. So Joſephus affirms of this generation, after they had rejected and ſlain the Lord Chriſt, that they fell into ſuch an hell of provoking abominations, that "if the Romans had not come and deſtroyed them, God "would have ſent fire and brimſtone upon them from heaven, as he did on "Sodom."—Owen's Humble Teſtimony unto the Goodneſs and Severity of God, p. 2,—4.

† Mat. xxiii. 35. z Rev. vi. 9.—11.

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ſo is the vengeance. As the church of Rome hath adopted almoſt all the idolatries of that heatheniſm which preceded her, only with a change of names, whence her members are called the *Gentiles* [a]; ſhe hath alſo in another reſpect appropriated the guilt of Rome heathen as her own, by carrying on the ſame accurſed work of perſecuting the ſaints. Therefore it is ſaid; "In her "was found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, "and of all that were ſlain on the earth [b]." The blood of all that have been ſlain on the earth, that is, for the ſake of religion, is aſcribed to her; becauſe the greateſt part of it has been ſhed either by her immediate agency, by her inſtigation, or in conſequence of adhering to her bloody principles. But perhaps the *earth* here denotes the extent of the Roman empire; as the term is moſt generally uſed in this prophecy. And indeed, there has ſcarcely been any blood ſhed within the limits of the empire, whatever has been the pretence, that may not be traced to the ſkirts of this harlot. Even thoſe wars, which have not been waged expreſsly under the pretence of religion, have generally been owing to her deteſtable policy, to the influence of her principles as intoxicating the nations, or to the ſecret machinations of her members.

v. The puniſhment with which God viſits children, for the iniquity of their fathers, is *not merely* of a *temporal* kind. Not to mention other conſiderations,

a Rev. xi. 2. b Rev. xviii. 24.

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ſiderations, this appears from the contraſt ſtated in the threatening. Surely, the mercy which God keeps for thouſands is not confined to this life: and it is not natural to think, that the judgment oppoſed to it ſhould be limited in this manner. But God does not condemn any to eternal puniſhment, properly and immediately on the ground of thoſe iniquities which their fathers have committed. The utmoſt we can ſuppoſe is, that as the puniſhment of guilty parents, he withholds from their children that grace which he is under no obligation to confer on any, leaves them to the workings of their own corruptions, and thus ſuffers them to imitate the wicked conduct of their parents. At length the ſentence of his wrath goes forth againſt them, as having made the ſins of their fathers their own. To this purpoſe that man of God, Calvin, expreſſes his ſentiments: "If the whole nature of man deſerves "condemnation, we are aſſured that deſtruction "is prepared for thoſe from whom God with-"holds his grace. They notwithſtanding periſh "by their own iniquity, not by any unjuſt ha-"tred on the part of God. Nor is there any room "left for demanding, why they are not aided by "the ſaving grace of God, as well as others.—If "the viſitation, of which we ſpeak, is fulfilled, "when the Lord removes from the poſterity of "the wicked his grace, the light of his truth, and "the other means of ſalvation; ſo that the chil-"dren, blinded, and deſerted of him, tread in the "footſteps of their parents, they ſuſtain the curſe

"on

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" on account of paternal iniquities; but in their " being ſubjected to temporal miſeries, and at " length to eternal deſtruction, they are thus pu- " niſhed by the righteous judgment of God, not " for the ſins of others, but for their own [c]." The obſervations of that eminent light of our own land, Durham, merit our particular attention. They contain an anſwer to this queſtion. " How " doth God reach children with eternal plagues " for their parents' ſins? Anſw. He doth it cer- " tainly, and he doth it juſtly: therefore the chil- " dren muſt not only be conſidered as guilty, but " as guilty of the ſins of their parents, which we " may thus conceive; 1. As to the child of a " wicked parent, lying in natural corruption, God " denieth and withholdeth his renewing and " reſtraining grace which he is not obliged to " confer; and the Lord in this may reſpect the " parents' guilt juſtly. 2. When grace is denied, " then followeth the temptation of the parents' " practice; the devil ſtirring up to the like ſin, " and they furthering their children to wicked- " neſs by their example, advice, authority, &c. " So that it cometh to paſs in God's juſtice, that " they are given up to vent their natural cor- " ruption in theſe ways, and ſo come, as it is " Pſal. xlix. 13., to approve their parents' ſay- " ings. 3. Upon this followeth God's caſting " the child, now guilty of his parent's faults, in- " to eternal perdition with him: and that this is " the meaning of the threatening, will appear by " the

[c] Inſtitut. lib. ii. cap. 8. ſ. 20.

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" the examples of God's juſtice in this matter,
" when wicked parents have children that are not
" ſo much miſerable in regard of temporal things;
" as they are wicked, curſed, and plagued with
" ungodlineſs. So were Cain's children, ſo were
" the children of Ham, and ſo were Eſau's; who
" were all for a long time proſperous in the world,
" but following their father's ſins, (a main part of
" their curſe), God afterward viſited them on
" them, with ſad temporal judgments alſo [d]."

The learned Dr Barrow, although adhering to a different ſyſtem, expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject, in language much of the ſame import. He extends the viſitation to ſpiritual, as well as temporal, judgments; declaring it to be the meaning of the threatening, that on account of the ſins of anceſtors, God " will withdraw his free fa-
" vours from" their children. " That meaſure
" of grace and indulgence," he ſubjoins, " which
" otherwiſe the ſon of ſuch a perſon (had he not
" been a great traitor againſt God) might accord-
" ing to the general courſe of God's goodneſs
" have received, the which might have more ef-
" fectually reſtrained him from ſin, and conſe-
" quently have prevented his guilt and his pu-
" niſhment, God may well (in conſiſtence with
" his juſtice and goodneſs, to manifeſt his deteſ-
" tation of heinous wickedneſs), withhold from
" him [e]."

VI. The

[d] Expoſit. Ten Commandments, p. 127.

[e] Expoſition of the Decalogue, p. 400, 401.

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VI. The juſtice of this procedure is admitted, according to the received principles of *equity* among *men.* In almoſt all nations, it is accounted juſt that children ſhould ſuffer for the crimes of their parents. Debts deſcend with property; and he who intermeddles with the property, is legally conſidered as ſerving himſelf heir to all the debt attached to it. Now, he who imitates, who juſtifies, or who does not ſincerely confeſs and bewail the iniquity of his fathers, in like manner ſerves himſelf heir to all the debt of guilt which they have contracted towards God. Is it juſt in man to ſet ſo ſevere a ſtigma on treaſon and ſome other crimes deeply affecting ſociety, as to deprive the children, although perſonally innocent, of both the honours and the eſtates enjoyed by their parents, and otherwiſe legally deſcending to them? and ſhall we ſuppoſe that ſin, as committed againſt the Judge of the univerſe, is of ſo much leſs importance, as to refuſe to him the right of puniſhing it in a ſimilar manner?

So far from quarrelling with the juſtice of God, ſhould we not rather admire his longſuffering and mercy in this procedure? Often he delays puniſhment from one generation to another, giving time for conſideration and repentance. If "the "heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to "do evil, becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is "not executed ſpeedily," the blame is wholly their own, not God's. The riches of his goodneſs ſhould produce an effect directly contrary; for it "leads to repentance."

It

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It would ſeem, that at times God puniſhes the religious children of the wicked, for the ſins of their parents; but eventually for their good, both for time and for eternity. For the ſins of Jeroboam, God had threatened to "take away the "remnant of his houſe, as a man taketh away "dung, till it be all gone." When Abijah, the pious ſon of ſo wicked a father, fell ſick, God would not ſpare his life, becauſe of the vengeance he had denounced. But his affliction, we may be aſſured from the tenor of the divine conduct to all the heirs of ſalvation, was overruled in ſubſerviency to his eternal good. And even an early death was to him converted into a bleſſing in a temporal reſpect; as he was ſaved from the violence and ignominy that awaited all the reſt of Jeroboam's ſeed. It was therefore foretold concerning him: "He only of Jeroboam ſhall come to "the grave, becauſe in him there is found ſome "good thing toward the LORD God of Iſrael in "the houſe of Jeroboam [f]."

Here I ſhall only add, that in Scripture we have various examples of God's viſiting the iniquities of one or more individuals, if not duly puniſhed, on a whole ſociety. This was the caſe as to the tranſgreſſion of Achan, and of Korah. This may aſſiſt us in thinking of divine juſtice, as diſplayed in viſiting the iniquities of fathers on their children. For there is an analogy between the one and the other. A ſociety, preſently exiſting, is viewed as if individually one, becauſe the various

[f] 1 Kings xiv. 1. 10.—13.

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ous members have one common centre of union, are all parts conſtituting one whole, and form one body in a civil or religious reſpect. A family or nation is alſo viewed as one, in its ſucceſſive generations; both becauſe of their natural relations, parents being continued in their poſterity; and alſo becauſe of their collective unity, as they ſtill conſtitute the ſame body, notwithſtanding the change of individuals.

I ſhall now conſider ſome objections that have been made to this doctrine.

1. It hath been objected, that it cannot be true, becauſe it would imply a contradiction in the language of Scripture; eſpecially as it is ſaid, "The "ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die; the ſon ſhall not "bear the iniquity of the father [g]." But there is no contradiction between this and the precept. The ſon here meant is not a wicked perſon; but one who, being come to years of diſcretion, diſapproves and forſakes the unrighteous way of his father. For it is declared; "When the ſon hath "done that which is lawful and right, and hath "kept all my ſtatutes, and hath done them, he "ſhall ſurely live [h]." Now, the threatening added to the ſecond commandment reſpects not righteous children, but thoſe who, chooſing and continuing in the wicked ways of their fathers, plainly declare that they are "haters of God:" and, as has been ſeen, although others have been puniſhed,

g Ezek. xviii. 20. h Ver. 19.

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niſhed, this is not the ordinary tenor of providential diſpenſations.

It muſt alſo be obſerved, that here a reply is made to the unjuſt and inſolent cavils of an obdurate people. They preſumptuouſly alleged, that God's ways were not equal. Aſſerting their own innocence, they pretended, that all the puniſhment brought on them as a nation, eſpecially in their captivity, was for the iniquities of their fathers. Hence it became a proverb with them, "The fathers have eaten ſour grapes, and the "children's teeth are ſet on edge[i]." To illuſtrate the juſtice of his procedure, God informs them, that he ſhould proportion their puniſhment to their perſonal crimes. Here, then, God does not deny his right to viſit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; but declares, that in dealing with this people, for ſome time at leaſt, he was willing to proceed with them, as if ſuch a threatening had never been made. He does not tell what he might do, in ſtrict juſtice; but what he would do in fact, to ſilence their charges of injuſtice. This is not the promulgation of a ſtanding law, but of a temporary diſpenſation for a particular reaſon. It is an anſwer to the preſumptuous query of the Jews, "Doth not the ſon bear the "iniquity of the father[k]?" This anſwer at the ſame time ſeems to intimate, that although in their preſent puniſhment, God had "recompenſed "into their boſoms their iniquities, and the ini-"quities of their fathers together," yet as far as

i Ezek. xviii. 2. 25. 29. k Ver. 19.

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adults at leaſt were concerned, they ſuffered no more than they would have done according to the demerit of their own crimes. They thought they were themſelves innocent; but they had made the iniquities of their fathers their own, by treading in their ſteps.

2. It has been aſſerted, that this kind of puniſhment was peculiar to the old diſpenſation, and that it is aboliſhed under the new. It has been ſaid by one learned writer, that "this puniſhment was only to ſupply the want of a future ſtate;" and that this "is evident from hence, "that towards the concluſion of this extraordinary economy, when God, by the later prophets, "reveals his purpoſe of giving them a new diſpenſation, in which a future ſtate of reward and "puniſhment was to be brought to light, it is "then declared in the moſt expreſs manner, that "he will abrogate the law of puniſhing children "for the crimes of their parents. Jeremiah, ſpeaking of this new diſpenſation, ſays: "In *thoſe* "days, they ſhall ſay no more, The fathers have "eaten a ſour grape, and the children's teeth are "ſet on edge: but every *one ſhall die for his* "*own iniquity*, every man that eateth the ſour "grape, his teeth ſhall be ſet on edge. Behold "the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will make "a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael,—not "according to the covenant that I made with "their fathers[1]," &c. The author referred to alſo

1 Warburton's Divine Legation, vol. iv. p. 327, &c.

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alſo quotes that paſſage from Ezekiel, which we have already conſidered.

This ingenious writer has indeed ſtrained every nerve, in order to ſhew that there was no revelation of a future ſtate under the Moſaic diſpenſation. But on this point, ſuffice it to ſay, that all the learning he has diſplayed is but a mere waſte of words, as long as we have the reaſoning of Chriſt with the Sadducees, in proof of the doctrine of a reſurrection, from the language of God to Moſes [k]. While the foundation of his ſyſtem is falſe, it is impoſſible that the ſuperſtructure ſhould be ſolid.

That theſe words, "The days come,—that I "will make a new covenant with the houſe of "Iſrael," refer to the New Teſtament, there is no ground to doubt; becauſe they are thus applied by an inſpired apoſtle. But there is not the ſame evidence as to the words preceding [l]. All that certainly appears is, that they immediately refer to the days ſucceeding the captivity, and the reſtoration of the Jews to their own land; when they ſhould not complain, as formerly, that they ſuffered for the iniquity of their fathers, becauſe a great portion of the deſerved puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on them in the furnace of Babylon. There is no reference in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel to the goſpel diſpenſation. There is nothing that carries forward the declaration, on which the objection is founded, to the New Teſtament. God evidently ſpeaks of his conduct towards the very ſame people, who had

k Luke xx. 37, 38. l Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.

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accuſed him of injuſtice. He ſpeaks of it as what ſhould take place, not in any future age, but from that day forward: "As I live, ſaith the LORD "God, ye ſhall not have occaſion *any more* to uſe "this proverb in Iſrael [m]."

It muſt be acknowledged, however, that the paſſage in Jeremiah has been underſtood, by ſome of the warmeſt friends of the doctrines of the goſpel, as reſpecting New-Teſtament times, and as denoting the greater mildneſs of this diſpenſation. According to the general tenor of the Moſaic economy, indeed, God acted with far more ſeverity. "Every tranſgreſſion received a juſt recompence "of reward." This threatening, among others, was executed with more rigour and frequency; and the tokens of divine diſpleaſure were of a more ſenſible and ſtriking kind. As temporal rewards were more ſuitable to the character of the diſpenſation, ſo were temporal puniſhments; when the eternal ſtate was more obſcurely revealed, and to be diſcerned eſpecially through a multitude of ſhadows. But although the threatening is not executed with the ſame ſeverity, it is not therefore aboliſhed: although the puniſhment is not ſo ſtriking to the ſenſes, under the New Teſtament, it will not follow that it was therefore peculiar to the Old. Even admitting that this declaration, "The ſon "ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father," refers to the New Teſtament, it will not follow, that the threatening affixed to the ſecond commandment is abrogated. For with equal propriety, according

[m] Ezek. xviii. 3.

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ing to this rigid mode of interpretation, it might be inferred, that under this new diſpenſation no man's *own* ſins ſhall be imputed to him: becauſe it follows, "I will remember their ſin no more[n]." It might be argued with conſiderable appearance of truth, that if both expreſſions refer to the New Teſtament, both muſt reſpect the ſame perſons; and that theſe are ſuch only as are truly forgiven of God: and therefore that it no more proves that God will not puniſh the iniquities of fathers on their children, than it proves that he will not puniſh ſin at all.

I ſhall only add, that Chriſt and his own prophets muſt certainly agree. What they ſay, therefore, muſt be underſtood in uniſon with his denunciation againſt the Jews, which we have already conſidered, that upon them ſhould "come "all the righteous blood ſhed on the earth." This viſitation hath undoubtedly taken place during the new diſpenſation. And ſimilar is the vengeance he hath denounced againſt Rome. Have we not ſeen it awfully executed in our own day? What idea can we form of the dreadful deluge of blood in a neighbouring country, but that it is the vengeance of JEHOVAH, the vengeance of his temple? If ever any people have had "blood to "drink," this undoubtedly has been their portion. Had we exact regiſters of families, we ſhould ſee, I am perſuaded, the awful retributions of juſtice to ſucceeding generations, and the ſins moſt legibly expreſſed in the circumſtances of the puniſhment.

[n] Jer. xxxi. 34.

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This vengeance has eminently purſued the royal family. On the devoted head of an unfortunate prince, have the crimes of his fathers, and eſpecially of that vain-glorious tyrant and cruel perſecutor Louis XIV., been viſited. "What," may it be ſaid, "was he not leſs guilty, nay, a more "amiable man, and a better prince, than the moſt "of his predeceſſors?" We admit it. But ſuch is the myſterious nature of the divine diſpenſation. The wicked Ahab was ſpared, and Jehoram ſuffered, who, although he wrought evil, did not do ſo "like his father, and like his mother[o]." Jeroboam, that great tranſgreſſor, was ſuffered to die in peace; and the vengeance laid hold of his poſterity, although not ſo infamous as he for perſonal iniquity. Let it be admitted, that the enemies of Louis had no right to take his life; this does not alter the character of the puniſhment, as proceeding from the Supreme Judge. It is perfectly conſiſtent with his ſpotleſs holineſs, to employ even "the wrath of man." He hath "created the waſter to deſtroy." He, who raiſed up a Jehu againſt the houſe of Ahab, hath raiſed up wicked and bloodthirſty men as the inſtruments of his vengeance againſt the houſe of Bourbon. Louis XVI. did not ſhed the blood of the ſaints. He even manifeſted a ſpirit of toleration. But he was *not bumbled* on account of that iniquity committed by his anceſtors. Although he did not work evil like unto them, he "clave to the ſins of "Jeroboam," by retaining "the mark of the "beaſt."

[o] 2 Kings iii. 3.

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"beaſt." He adhered to the mother of harlots, and thus became a "partaker of her plagues."

The vengeance of God hath alſo been eminently diſplayed againſt the clergy of France, who have, in former ages, been the great inſtigators and inſtruments of the perſecution of the ſaints. As to them, there could not be a literal execution of the threatening. But God deals with ſocieties as with families. As parents are perpetuated in their poſterity, ſocieties, as has already been ſeen, are viewed as ſtill the ſame bodies, notwithſtanding the change of individuals. God views ſucceſſors as adopting the ſins of thoſe who have preceded them, and ſubjecting themſelves to the deſerved puuiſhment; in as far as they adopt thoſe very principles which have naturally produced ſuch ſins. Now, Popery is always the ſame. It is a religion that ſhall be overthrown, but can never be reformed. Whatever be the conduct or diſpoſitions of individuals, the general character of her votaries is, that they "repent not of their "deeds [p]."

Parents, mark what a ſtriking beacon is here ſet up to deter you from ſin. Do you love the fruit of your body? Shew the ſincerity of this love, by hating and avoiding ſin; leſt you ſubject your children to a judicial viſitation from the righteous Judge. Are you eager to lay up treaſure for them? Take heed that it be not a treaſure of wrath. If you endeavour to accumulate wealth for their behoof, by unrighteous means,

[p] Rev. xvi. 9, 11.

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you indeed leave them a wretched inheritance. Are you ſhocked at the cruelty of thoſe parents who of old devoted their children to the murderous Moloch? Tremble, leſt you be found chargeable with cruelty ſtill more fatal, as terminating in the deſtruction of their immortal ſouls.

What encouragement have you to love that gracious God, who "keepeth mercy for thou-"ſands!" Let your prayers daily reach the throne in behalf of your beloved children. Let them daily witneſs your holy converſation. Both may be bleſſed of God, as means of their eternal ſalvation. What comfort muſt it afford you, if you be inſtrumental in bringing them to the participation of that mercy which he extends to yourſelves!

Let thoſe, who are the children of wicked parents, avoid their evil example. Nor is this enough. The Lord requires of you, that you be humbled in his ſight on account of their iniquities. He requires, that you ſhould come to his throne with this language in your lips, as proceeding from the heart: "We have ſinned "with our fathers.—We lie down in our ſhame, "and our confuſion covereth us: for we have "ſinned againſt the LORD our God, we and our "fathers, from our youth even unto this day, "and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our "God [q]."

SECT.

[q] Pſal. cvi. 6.; Jer. iii. 25.

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SECTION VI.

On the Deſtruction of the Nations of Canaan.—Preliminary obſervations.—This Puniſhment conſiſtent with Divine Juſtice.—Contained a ſignal diſplay of Wiſdom, and even of Goodneſs.—Objections anſwered.

It has been commonly urged by Deiſts, as a powerful argument againſt the truth of the Old Teſtament, that it is utterly inconceivable that God ſhould enjoin the Iſraelites to exterminate the nations of Canaan. The idea, it has been ſaid, is totally irreconcilable with divine juſtice, and with the other perfections of Deity. Hence it has been inferred, that God never gave any ſuch command; and of conſequence, that thoſe writings, in which it is aſcribed to him, muſt be a groſs impoſition upon mankind.

But let us attend to the primary fact. Theſe nations were either deſtroyed, in part at leaſt, by the Iſraelites, or they were not. It is ſcarcely ſuppoſable, that any will adopt the latter hypotheſis. How can it otherwiſe be imagined, that the Iſraelites got poſſeſſion of the country formerly belonging to the Canaanites? That the Iſraelites were not the firſt inhabitants, appears undeniable,

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niable, not only from the conſtant acknowledgment of this people, but from various veſtiges in profane hiſtory. Some of theſe have been formerly conſidered. Were it neceſſary, a variety of others might be produced. According to Procopius, a celebrated writer of the ſixth century, many of the Girgaſhites, Jebuſites, and other Canaanitiſh nations, ſettled at Tingis, now Tangier, in Africa. "There," he ſays, "nigh a large "fountain, appear two pillars of white ſtone, ha"ving this inſcription engraved on them in Phe"nician characters, *We are thoſe who fled from* "*the face of Joſhua, the ſon of Nave, the rob*"*ber*[r]." Whatever may be thought of this inſcription, his teſtimony with reſpect to Canaanites ſettling in that part of the country, is confirmed by different writers. Auguſtine, Biſhop of Hippo in Africa, teſtifies, that "if any of the "boors in the neighbourhood of Hippo or Car"thage was aſked who he was, or of what coun"try, he anſwered that he was a Canaanite[s]." Euſebius alſo aſſerts, that the Canaanites, who were routed by Joſhua, led colonies into Africa, and ſettled at Tripoli[t]. Even Mela the geographer, who flouriſhed in the reign of Claudius Cæſar, and who had been born in the neighbourhood of Tingis, admits that the Tingitanians were Phenicians[u]. This I need ſcarcely ſay, was the name by which the inhabitants of Paleſtine were generally known among other nations. The Greek poet

r Vandalic. lib. 2.
s Ap. Bocharti Chanaan. lib. i. c. 24.
t Chron. lib. 2.
u Geog. lib. ii. c. 6.

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poet Nonnus, from ſome authors whoſe works are now loſt, aſſures us, that Cadmus the Phenician made a very ſucceſsful expedition into theſe parts of Africa. "Philiſtus of Syracuſe, a writer of "good authority, who lived above three hundred "and fifty years before Chriſt, relates, that the "firſt traces of Carthage, were owing to Zorus "and Charchedon, two Tyrians or Phenicians, "thirty years before the deſtruction of Troy, ac-"cording to Euſebius[y]."

If it be admitted that the Iſraelites deſtroyed or expelled the Canaanites, ſo as to get poſſeſſion of the principal part of their land; to every candid inquirer, it will appear neceſſary to adopt the ſcriptural narrative of this conqueſt as the only true one. For, if this be rejected, it ſeems impoſſible to form any hypotheſis on this ſubject that will even have the air of probability.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that the Iſraelites vanquiſhed the Canaanites from their ſuperior bravery or ſkill in the uſe of arms. For although every other nation hath diſcovered the greateſt reluctance to renounce any portion of military glory, to which either in former or later times they could exhibit any claim, the Iſraelites have ſtill aſcribed their victories on this occaſion to divine power. However zealous for the honour of their anceſtors, they have ſaid in all their ſucceeding generations; "We have heard with our ears, O "God, our fathers have told us, what work thou "didſt in their days, in the times of old. How "thou

[y] Anc. Univ. Hiſt. vol. xvii p. 220.

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" thou didſt drive out the heathen with thy hand, " and plantedſt them; how thou didſt afflict the " people, and caſt them out. For they got not " the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, nei- " ther did their own arm ſave them: but thy " right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy " countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto " them [w]." Not one of their writers, in a ſingle inſtance, attempts to ingratiate himſelf with his nation, by employing any other language. This conduct, ſo directly contrary to that of every other people, nay, to the fixed principles of human nature, manifeſts the fulleſt and moſt impreſſive conviction of the truth of what they aſſert.

It is irrational, indeed, to ſuppoſe that the Iſraelites ſhould be equal to the Canaanites in military power. The former, it is admitted on all hands, were in a ſtate of ſlavery in Egypt. The Iſraelites themſelves acknowledge, that they were afraid to encounter the Canaanites, becauſe they were mightier than they; that they murmured at the report of the ſpies who were ſent to view the land; that they refuſed to enter into it; and that on this account God deſtroyed them in the wilderneſs.

No one, ſurely, will venture to aſſert, that the Iſraelites overpowered the Canaanites in conſequence of their ſuperiority as to numbers. An undiſciplined multitude could have done little againſt a variety of nations ſo inured to war, as to have chariots of iron, and, according to the ſtrong metaphors

[w] Pſal. xliv. 1.—3.

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metaphors commonly uſed in the languages of the Eaſt, "cities walled to heaven." But ſo far were the Iſraelites from ſurpaſſing their enemies in number, that they bore no proportion to them in this reſpect.

It has been fooliſhly ſaid, that "we read in the "books aſcribed to Moſes, Joſhua, &c. that the "Iſraelites came by *ſtealth* upon whole nations of "people [x]." But nothing of this nature is ſaid in any of theſe books. Nor was it poſſible that "whole nations of people" could have been overcome by the Iſraelites in this manner. Had they ſucceeded in ſubduing one city or one nation by ſtealth, the reſt would undoubtedly have taken the alarm, and prepared to defend themſelves.

As it thus appears that the Iſraelites could not be indebted, for their conqueſt of Canaan, to ſuperiority in military proweſs, or in numbers, or to any ſucceſsful ſtratagem; and that they have ſtill aſcribed it to the power of God; it follows that the account given in Scripture of this conqueſt cannot be reaſonably rejected. We have formerly conſidered the preſervation of the Gibeonites to a late period in the Jewiſh hiſtory, as a ſtanding teſtimony of the truth of thoſe wonderful facts which are recorded in the books of Moſes and Joſhua. Their preſervation may particularly be viewed as a ſtriking proof that the Iſraelites acted by the authority of God in deſtroying the Canaanites; as they formed a part of one of the ſeven nations ſaid to be devoted to deſtruction.

Before

x Age of Reaſon, Part II. p. 2.

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Before particularly entering on the conſideration of the objections made to this part of the Sacred Hiſtory, I ſhall premiſe a few things, which may tend to reſcue this injunction from the falſe and invidious light in which it has been exhibited.

Firſt, This deſtruction was amply *merited*. The crimes of the devoted nations were very heinous. Adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and beſtiality prevailed among them. They not only worſhipped a great multitude of ſtrange gods, but offered human ſacrifices. In the blindeſs and cruelty of their idolatry, they ſacrificed their own children [y]. Their crimes were highly aggravated. It would ſeem that they had rapidly corrupted themſelves. So late as the period of Abraham's ſojourning in Canaan, many of its inhabitants appear to have worſhipped the true God. Among theſe we may reckon, not only Melchizedek king of Salem, but Abimelech king of Gerar [z]. It is natural to think that their people adhered to the ſame worſhip. They had enjoyed many mercies. Abraham, Lot, Iſaac and Jacob ſojourned among them. They had the benefit of their example, inſtructions and reproofs. Theſe patriarchs frequently changed their ſituation. This might be ordered in Providence, not merely to remind themſelves that they were only pilgrims, but that the benefit already mentioned might be more extenſively diffuſed among the inhabitants of that country. But

y Lev. xviii. 3. 6.—24. z Gen. xx. 4. 9.

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But they deſpiſed their mercy. Nor did they take warning from the awful puniſhment of the cities of the plain, although this puniſhment was inflicted for the commiſſion of a crime common among themſelves. God exerciſed his long-ſuffering towards ſome of theſe nations for more than four centuries, after they were greatly corrupted. He would not caſt them out of Canaan, till their *iniquity* was *full*, not even to make way for the ſeed of Abraham [a].

Secondly, This deſtruction was *limited*. The Iſraelites had no authority to deſtroy any of the heathen nations, except thoſe ſeven particularly mentioned. They were to offer peace to others, and could only make them tributaries [b]. The inoffenſive conduct of the Iſraelites, indeed, to ſeveral other nations, affords a ſtrong collateral proof that they acted under a divine command in what they did to the ſeven nations of Canaan. Can it be accounted for on natural principles, that they ſhould have quietly paſſed by other nations, whom they could as eaſily have conquered, as far as natural ſtrength was concerned, nay more eaſily; nations, for whom they had no partiality; from whom indeed they had received ſuch provocation, as is generally reckoned a ſufficient reaſon for hoſtility; whereas the Canaanites had done them no injury whatſoever? Were the Iſraelites ſo bloody a race; and how did they ſpare the Moabites and Ammonites, who not only refuſed them a paſſage through their land [c], but hired Balaam

a Gen. xv. 16. b Deut. xx. 10, 11. c Judg. xi. 17.

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Balaam to curſe them [d]? Whence did they diſcover no inclination to avenge themſelves on the children of Edom, although the latter would not ſuffer them to paſs through their territories, where they offered to pay for every thing they needed; and even came out againſt them in a hoſtile manner [e]? Theſe circumſtances are totally irreconcilable, not merely with the character given to the Iſraelites by the enemies of religion, but with their conduct towards the Canaanites; unleſs we receive the ſolution given in their own ſcriptures, that they acted under the influence of a prohibition in the one caſe, and obeyed an expreſs command in the other. No provocation could give them a warrant to injure theſe nations. For God had ſaid; "Diſtreſs not the Moabites, neither "contend with them in battle: for I will not "give thee of their land for a poſſeſſion, becauſe "I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a "poſſeſſion.—Thou art to paſs through Ar, the "coaſt of Moab this day. And when thou co-"meſt nigh over againſt the children of Ammon, "diſtreſs them not, nor meddle with them: for I "will not give thee of the land of the children "of Ammon any poſſeſſion, becauſe I have given "it unto the children of Lot for a poſſeſſion [f]." They had received ſimilar inſtructions with reſpect to Edom. The Lord ſaid to Moſes, "Com-"mand thou the people, ſaying, Ye are to paſs "through the coaſt of your brethren the children "of Eſau, which dwell in Seir, and they ſhall be "afraid

d Deut. xxiii. 4. e Numb. xx. 14.—21. f Deut. ii. 9. 17.—19.

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"afraid of you: take ye good heed unto your-
"ſelves therefore. Meddle not with them; for
"I will not give you of their land, no not ſo
"much as a foot-breadth, becauſe I have given
"Mount Seir unto Eſau for a poſſeſſion. Ye ſhall
"buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat;
"and ye ſhall alſo buy water of them for money,
"that ye may drink [g]." Whence the difference of their conduct to Sihon king of the Amorites? They ſent the ſame meſſage to him, when on their way to Canaan, which they had ſent to the kings of Moab and Edom. Sihon did nothing more than theſe other kings had done. He refuſed to ſuffer the Iſraelites to paſs through his land, and came out againſt them to battle. He even did leſs than the king of Moab. He uſed no divinations againſt them. But he and all his people were deſtroyed. We can account for this difference no other way, than by believing that the Iſraelites were reſtrained by a divine prohibition in the one caſe, but not in the other.

Thirdly, This deſtruction was to be *gradual*. Hence Moſes ſaid to the Iſraelites, concerning the devoted nations; "The LORD thy God will put
"out thoſe nations before thee, by little and lit-
"tle: thou mayeſt not conſume them at once,
"leſt the beaſts of the field increaſe upon thee [h]."
Here we obſerve a trait of mercy not merely to the Iſraelites, but to the Canaanites. Thus, an opportunity was left them to flee out of the land, if they choſe. For it would ſeem that the threat-

g Deut. ii. 4.—6. h Deut. vii. 22.

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ened deſtruction did not neceſſarily imply a total extirpation of all the individuals, but might be viewed as truly accompliſhed with reſpect to all who were *driven out* of the land of promiſe in whatever way. In conſequence of the gradual execution of the ſentence, time was alſo left to individuals to conſider the wonderful works of the true God: and it would ſeem, that if they repented and forſook their idolatry, they would be ſpared and admitted into communion with the Church, in the ſame manner with Rahab and her father's family.

In a word, all the cities and nations, which the Iſraelites deſtroyed, *appeared in arms* againſt them. Not one of them made any overtures for peace, or teſtified a wiſh for it. "There was not a city "that made peace with the children of Iſrael, "ſave the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all "other they took in battle. For it was of the "LORD to harden their hearts, that they ſhould "come againſt Iſrael in battle, that he might de- "ſtroy them utterly, that they might have no fa- "vour, but that he might deſtroy them, as the "LORD commanded Moſes[i]." Let us take the different parts of the narrative in connexion. They "heard how the LORD had dried up the wa- "ter of the Red Sea for" the Iſraelites[k], how he had "dried up the waters of Jordan from before "them[l]," and knew what had happened to Jericho[m]. As they could not doubt the truth of theſe miracles, one would naturally ſuppoſe that they

i Joſh. xi. 19, 20. k Joſh. ii. 10. l Joſh. v. 1. m Joſh. x. 3.

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they would have imitated the conduct of the Gibeonites, and tried at leaſt if the ſame mercy would be extended to them. But ſo far was this from being the caſe, that a number of the kings of Canaan were ſo exaſperated againſt the Gibeonites for accepting of peace with Iſrael, as to join their forces for the expreſs purpoſe of deſtroying them. The king of Jeruſalem ſent to the reſt, ſaying; "Come up unto me, and help me, "that we may ſmite Gibeon; for it hath made "peace with Joſhua, and with the children of "Iſrael[n]." Greater obduracy, or more inveterate enmity, can hardly be conceived. Thus they were ripened for deſtruction. Their deſtruction indeed is immediately aſcribed to their obduracy. The reaſon given for their reſiſtance is, that "it "was of the LORD to harden their hearts,—that "they might have no favour, but that he might "deſtroy them," that is, God in righteous judgment gave them up to hardneſs of heart, as a puniſhment of their former guilt, and as a preparative for a ſtill greater puniſhment[a].

Let no one ſay, "If God had devoted them to "deſtruction, they would certainly have been de-"ſtroyed, whether they had hardened themſelves "or not. Suppoſing ſuch a purpoſe, any appli-"cation for mercy would have been unavailing." No one has a right to ſpeak in this manner. We may ſafely aſſert the contrary. For ſuch is the inſeparable connexion between the purpoſe itſelf, and all the circumſtances leading to the exe-

n Joſh. x. 4.

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cution of it, that it is juſt as eaſy to ſuppoſe the failure of the purpoſe, as the want of one of theſe circu ſtances. It is clear from the event, that theſe nations could not have been deſtroyed, had they not hardened themſelves againſt God and his people. For we are certain that they did thus harden themſelves, before they were deſtroyed; and therefore we no leſs certainly conclude that God predetermined their deſtruction only in this way. When we are informed that they were given up of God to this aſtoniſhing obduracy,— "that they might have no favour, but that he "might deſtroy them;" it is evident not only that their obduracy was the crowning part of their guilt, and that which immediately procured their deſtruction; but that he denied them favour, only as obdurate in their wickedneſs. Could we for a moment ſuppoſe any circumſtance different from what muſt have been pre-ordained; we might ſafely infer from the language uſed, that they would have "had favour," had they not hardened themſelves, and "come againſt Iſrael in bat-"tle." This may be illuſtrated from the example of the Gibeonites. They belonged to one of theſe nations. But they hardened not themſelves, ſo as to war againſt Iſrael; and they obtained favour. The deceitful means which they employed, and the error of Joſhua and the princes in not aſking counſel of God, affect not the argument. It is clear from the event, not only that God had determined that they ſhould not be deſtroyed, but that he had determined that their ſubmiſſion

ſhould

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ſhould be the immediate mean of their preſervation. He, who can bring good out of evil, overruled their falſehood and the overſight of the leaders, for the accompliſhment of his own purpoſe of mercy. The contraſt which we have, in the words above quoted, between the conduct of the Gibeonites and that of the other nations, affords no inconſiderable evidence that God, in his purpoſe, had no leſs certainly connected the preſervation of the former with their ſubmiſſion, than the deſtruction of the latter with their obduracy.

1. We now proceed to vindicate the *juſtice* of God in the deſtruction of theſe nations. Their crimes, as we have ſeen, were of the deepeſt dye. He muſt be "worſe than an infidel," who will deny that ſuch crimes merit puniſhment. Were wicked nations ſuffered to eſcape with impunity, how could it appear that there was "a "God who judged in the earth?" It is neceſſary that crimes, which may properly be called national, ſhould be puniſhed in time; becauſe men, although exiſting individually, have no national exiſtence in the eternal ſtate. The crimes of the Canaanites were not only great, but, as we have alſo ſeen, highly aggravated; and they had arrived at ſuch a pitch of obduracy, that they paid no reſpect to the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles. Their "iniquity was full." The honour of divine juſtice required that their crimes ſhould be ſignally puniſhed. Their fate, accordingly, not

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only exhibited to the ſurrounding nations an awful example of the neceſſary connexion between ſin and puniſhment, but ſtill conveys to us the ſame important leſſon. It is, at the ſame time, a moſt ſtriking emblem of the tremendous puniſhment of the finally unbelieving; and awfully preſigures the juſtice of God in the everlaſting deſtruction of all who refuſe to aſk peace of the true Joſhua, who continue in arms againſt him. Thoſe only who are brought to enter into a league with him, to enter into his covenant, can be delivered from this deſtruction.

As the juſtice of God demands the puniſhment of tranſgreſſors; from his eſſential *ſovereignty*, he hath an unqueſtionable right to inflict puniſhment in whatever way he pleaſes. Many, who deny the truth of revelation, admit that God maintains his moral government of the world by bringing temporal calamities on the wicked. They acknowledge that famine, peſtilence and the ſword, are arrows in his quiver. If it be granted that the deſolations of war are the tokens of divine vengeance, and that God overrules theſe for the accompliſhment of his purpoſes; it is impoſſible to prove that he might not actually give a commiſſion to one people to execute the ſentence of his wrath againſt another. Deiſts themſelves admit that "God can, if he pleaſes, communicate "his will to man[o]." If he employ the inanimate and irrational creatures in fulfilling his vengeance, it is nowiſe repugnant to reaſon to ſuppoſe

o Age of Reaſon, Part I. p. 5.

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poſe that he may employ rational creatures in the ſame work, in conformity to their ſuperior powers, by expreſsly communicating to them his will. He who cauſes ſtormy winds and noiſome vapours, earthquakes and volcanoes, to "fulfil the "voice of his word," hath an equal right to employ rational creatures for ſimilar purpoſes. It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he will employ ſuch agents, when this method can be more ſubſervient to his deſigns than the operation of paſſive inſtruments. That this was the caſe in the inſtance under conſideration, will appear afterwards.

Let it be obſerved in the mean time, that although the Scripture repreſents the Iſraelites as inſtruments, it ſtill exhibits the work as God's. Thus he ſays to his people; "I will deſtroy all "the people to whom thou ſhalt come [p]." "The "LORD thy God ſhall deliver them unto thee, "and ſhall deſtroy them with a mighty deſtruc-"tion, until they be deſtroyed [q]." Here not only does the Supreme Judge appear, as paſſing ſentence on a guilty people, over whom he had the moſt unqueſtionable dominion, and delivering them into the hands of another people as the executioners of his ſentence; but as ſupernaturally enabling them, contrary to all human grounds of expectation, to fulfil his orders. And what is there in this, repugnant either to juſtice or to reaſon?

p Exod. xxiii. 27. q Deut. vii. 23.

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The circumſtance of which the enemies of revelation have made the greateſt handle, is that of children being involved in the common deſtruction. This idea, it muſt be acknowledged, is revolting to our feelings as men. To natural reaſon it may alſo ſeem irreconcilable with divine juſtice. But it is not really ſo. Every one, who denies not a Providence, muſt admit that God viſits with death thoſe who have never actually tranſgreſſed his law. A great part of mankind die in infancy. Now, death is either a mercy or a puniſhment. If a mercy to children, as ſome pretend, becauſe it delivers them from the evils of life; its nature cannot be changed by the manner in which it comes. Death, as ultimately proceeding from the hand of God, muſt be as really a mercy, when cauſed by the deſtroying ſword, as when it is the conſequence of a fever or peſtilence. The bulk of men, however, will conſider it as a puniſhment. That it is ſo, even to infants, appears from the ſevere ſufferings to which they are often ſubjected before death. Both feeling and reaſon proteſt againſt the abſurdity of viewing this as in itſelf a bleſſing. If, then, death be a puniſhment, the ſubjects of it muſt be viewed by God as guilty. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth "do right?" God cannot afflict the innocent. The word of revelation can alone enable us to ſolve this problem. Thoſe, who conſider death as a puniſhment, muſt, in order to be conſiſtent, either deny a Providence, or accede to the teſtimony of Scripture, when it informs us, that "in "Adam

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"Adam all die;" becauſe "all have ſinned in "him" as a federal head.

The idea of God's giving a command to the Iſraelites to deſtroy the children of the Canaanites, is not more inconſiſtent with his juſtice, than that of his giving a ſimilar command to any mortal malady. For no individual can die, without an act of the will of that God in whom we live. Such an exit, although more repugnant to our feelings, would be attended with far leſs ſuffering than death generally is in a natural way. By involving the children, then, in a common deſtruction with their parents, it would appear, that God meant to give to mankind an awful diſplay of his juſtice in the puniſhment of ſin, even in thoſe who had no actual guilt. The Iſraelites lived under a ſymbolical diſpenſation: and this deſtruction was to them a ſtriking ſymbol of the evil and demerit of original ſin. It conveys the ſame important leſſon to us. And doubtleſs, ſuch a general, ſudden and violent exciſion teaches this important doctrine, in a far more affecting manner than the progreſſive death of individuals, according to the ordinary courſe of our fallen nature.

11. Not only was it conſiſtent with the juſtice of God to puniſh theſe guilty nations, by employing another people as his inſtruments; but if we examine the ſubject further, it will appear that he ſignally diſplayed his *wiſdom* in adopting this method.

He

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He could not more effectually teſtify, to the ſurrounding nations, his hatred of ſin; and particularly of thoſe heinous iniquities by which they were defiled, in common with the Canaanites. Had he employed famine or peſtilence, or ſuffered them to be waſted in the common courſe of war, the nations around might have aſcribed their fate merely to ſecond cauſes. But when he employed another people as the inſtruments of his indignation, and atteſted their commiſſion by unqueſtionable miracles, the neighbouring heathen had the fulleſt evidence of a divine hand. They were doubtleſs convinced of this, although they continued in their obduracy. They had the ſame opportunity of knowing the great events which had already happened, as the Gibeonites, who had "heard the fame of the LORD God, and all "that he did in Egypt," as well as that he had "commanded his ſervant Moſes—to deſtroy all "the inhabitants of the land" of Canaan [r].

In reſpect of the Iſraelites, this deſtruction was deſigned as a preventive, both of ſin and of puniſhment. God had choſen them to be an holy people to himſelf. Now, we cannot conceive a more proper plan for impreſſing their minds with a ſenſe of the hatefulneſs of ſin in general, and particularly of the enormities of the Canaanites, than that of employing them as the miniſters of his juſtice. By their obedience in this reſpect, the Iſraelites became witneſſes againſt themſelves, if they ſhould ever tranſgreſs in a ſimilar way. They

r Joſh. ix. 9. 24.

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They rendered themſelves quite inexcuſable; and practically vindicated the juſtice of God, ſhould he afterwards puniſh them in the ſame manner, for imitating the wicked example of the devoted nations. The Iſraelites are commanded to deſtroy theſe nations, leſt they ſhould prove a *ſnare* to them, in reſpect of *ſin*. Thus it is ſaid, "Take "heed to thyſelf, leſt thou make a covenant with "the inhabitants of the land whither thou goeſt, "leſt it be for a ſnare in the midſt of thee. But "ye ſhall deſtroy their altars;—leſt thou make a "covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and "they go a whoring after their gods, and do ſa-"crifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and "thou eat of his ſacrifice §." The neceſſity of this deſtruction is alſo enjoined, from this conſideration, that the Canaanites, if ſpared, would eventually prove a ſnare with reſpect to *puniſhment*.—This ſhall be illuſtrated afterwards.

III. This command, therefore, although at firſt view it may ſeem to bear no other character than that of awful ſeverity, contains a diſplay of *goodneſs*. We conſider it merely in a partial light, unleſs we view it in connexion with the great and merciful deſign of God, in ſetting apart the Iſraelites as a peculiar people, for the preſervation of divine truth, when it had periſhed among other nations. Both the wiſdom and goodneſs of God required, that he ſhould employ the moſt proper means for preſerving this people from becoming ſo

§ Exod. xxxiv. 12. 15.

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ſo corrupt as to loſe the teſtimony he had given them. Had he pleaſed, he could have brought the Canaanites to embrace the truth. But this was inconſiſtent with his great plan under the law, which was to ſeparate one people from every other, as the depoſitaries of revelation. Now, had the Iſraelites been permitted to dwell among the heathen inhabitants of Canaan; in conſequence of the ſtrong bias in the heart to error and wickedneſs, the Iſraelites would ſoon have become as groſs as the Canaanites themſelves. Hence the preſervation of the true religion is given as the reaſon of the commanded deſtruction: "Thou "ſhalt utterly deſtroy them,—that they teach you "not to do after all their abominations, which "they have done unto their gods: ſo ſhould ye "ſin againſt the LORD your God[s]?"

Thus, beſides the intereſt that divine juſtice had in the deſtruction of this guilty people, God enjoined it on the Iſraelites on the ground of ſelf-defence. They would certainly expoſe themſelves to the loſs of temporal life, by ſparing the Canaanites. For in conſequence of following their example, they would provoke the LORD to deſtroy them. Therefore he thus warned them by Moſes; "If thou do at all forget the LORD "thy God, and walk after other gods, and ſerve "them, and worſhip them, I teſtify againſt you "this day, that ye ſhall utterly periſh. As the "nations which the LORD deſtroyeth before your "face, ſo ſhall ye periſh[t]." Not only ſhould their temporal

[s] Deut. xx. 17, 18. [t] Deut. viii. 19, 20.

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temporal life be in danger, but the life of their ſouls. By forſaking the true God, and worſhipping idols, they would expoſe themſelves to eternal deſtruction.

Tenderneſs to children is a motive which has great influence on parents. In this reſpect, the ſeverity of the diſpenſation towards the Canaanites, as extending to their children, was undoubtedly meant for the inſtruction and warning of the Iſraelites. The ſin of that people was clearly written in the nature of their puniſhment. From the dreadful influence of falſe religion, they had embrued their hands in the blood of their children. They had ſacrificed them to their idols; and in righteous judgment, "the LORD hath a ſa-"crifice [u]," in which parents and children ſhare a common fate. Thus the Iſraelites were forewarned, that if they apoſtatized from God, they would ſubject, not themſelves only, but their beloved offspring, to deſtruction. This diſpenſation was a practical commentary on the threatening he had pronounced by Moſes, with reſpect to the conſequence of diſobedience: "The ſword with-"out, and terror within, ſhall deſtroy both the "young man and the virgin, the ſuckling alſo "with the man of grey-hairs [v]." He uſes a ſimilar argument with his people in the days of Jeremiah: "Wherefore commit ye this great evil a-"gainſt your ſouls, to cut off from you man and "woman, child and ſuckling out of Judah, to "leave you none to remain; in that ye provoke "me

[u] Iſa. xxxiv. 6. [v] Deut. xxxii. 25.

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" me unto wrath with the works of your hands, " burning incenſe unto other gods [w] ?"

I have no doubt that the deſtruction of theſe nations was commanded by God, as an antidote to a greater evil, even in a natural point of view. Had this command been obeyed, it is highly probable that it would eventually have proved a mean of preſerving more lives. For even in this caſe it can hardly be ſuppoſed, that there would have been ſo great an expence of life, as there was in ſucceeding generations; in the impious ſacrifices of children, not by Canaanites only, but by the Iſraelites, imitating their example; in the bloody wars between theſe nations; and in the deſolating judgments inflicted by God on his own people, becauſe of their conformity to the heathen among whom they dwelt.

The event, indeed, illuſtrated both the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God in giving this command to Iſrael. They diſobeyed it in ſparing many of the Canaanites. Theſe proved a ſnare to them, and cauſed the continuance and propagation of the moſt abominable crimes, on account of which the Iſraelites were ſubjected to the moſt ſevere puniſhments. The true religion was never altogether loſt: but it often ſeemed to be nearly ſo. A very few years after the death of Joſhua, in conſequence of *dwelling among* the nations whoſe deſtruction God had commanded, the Iſraelites " took their daughters to be their wives, " and gave their daughters to their ſons, and ſer-

" ved

w Jer. xliv. 7, 8.

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"ved their gods;" ſo that "the anger of the "LORD was hot againſt them [x]." The Church of Iſrael, when, in a time of reformation, confeſſing her guilt and puniſhment, traces both to this primary act of diſobedience to the command of God. "They did not deſtroy the nations, concerning "whom the LORD commanded them: but were "mingled among the heathen, and learned their "works. And they ſerved their idols; which "were a ſnare unto them. Yea, they ſacrificed "their ſons and their daughters unto devils; and "ſhed innocent blood, even the blood of their "ſons and of their daughters, whom they ſacri-"ficed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land "was polluted with blood.—Therefore was the "wrath of the LORD kindled againſt his people, "inſomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. "And he gave them into the hand of the hea-"then; and they that hated them ruled over "them [y]."

It has been objected, that "it is inconceivable "that God ſhould ever have given ſuch a com-"mand to the Iſraelites; as its natural tendency "muſt have been to blunt every finer feeling in "their hearts, and to render them ſanguinary and "cruel."

In reply to this objection, a variety of conſiderations claim our attention. We are to conſider the nature of that diſpenſation under which the Iſraelites lived. It was a diſpenſation of terror. God

[x] Judg. iii. 5.—8. [y] Pſal. cvi. 34.—41.

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God in his infinite wiſdom adapted the diſpenſation to the ſtate of ſociety in general, and to the national character of the Iſraelites. The nations of the earth were univerſally depraved to a very high degree. The Iſraelites themſelves were a ſtubborn and a rebellious people. That peculiar diſpenſation, which he gave them, was eſpecially meant for the reſtraint of tranſgreſſion. From the abounding of wickedneſs among the ſurrounding nations, from the character of the Iſraelites themſelves, and from the comparatively ſmall degree of light which they enjoyed, ſtrong meaſures became neceſſary. The more gentle means employed by Providence under the goſpel, when light is more generally diffuſed, would have been inadequate in that period. "Life and immortality" were not yet "brought to light." The evidence of an eternal ſtate, although not entirely withheld, was comparatively obſcure. Hence, rewards and puniſhments of a temporal nature, were the moſt prominent features of the diſpenſation of the law. It was therefore neceſſary, that theſe ſhould be ſtriking, in proportion to the obſcurity which prevailed with reſpect to the eternal world. It was neceſſary that not only the heathen nations, but the peculiar people of God, ſhould be deterred from ſin by the moſt ſignal diſplays of God's diſpleaſure in temporal puniſhment. "Even the "heir," while in a ſtate of minority, was treated as "a bond-ſervant." There is now far leſs occaſion for ſuch ſeverity; as, beſides the ſuperior light of the goſpel, God hath given us the greateſt

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eſt poſſible evidence of his hatred of ſin, and diſpleaſure on account of it, in the ſufferings of his own eternal Son, as the Surety of his people.

The ſame objection may be brought, although on a ſmaller ſcale, againſt any great diſplay of juſtice among men. It would be impoſſible to ſupport civil ſociety without puniſhments, and in many caſes without ſevere ones. It has been ſeen, that, according to Scripture, the deſtruction of the Canaanites was a ſignal act of divine juſtice, and that it was meant for the prevention both of ſin and of puniſhment. It was not intended, like the execution of human laws, merely for exciting terror in the hearts of individuals, or for warning a ſingle nation; but as an awful example to many ſurrounding nations. It was an example, that, in its extent, bore ſome analogy to the extent of that kingdom, which "ruleth over all." This act of juſtice, however tremendous, was neceſſary. The nations of Canaan were incorrigible in their ſins. When wickedneſs comes to a certain pitch, it ſeems requiſite, for the maintenance of God's moral government, that he ſhould manifeſt his diſpleaſure by judgments of ſo remarkable a nature, as plainly to declare the hand of God to the moſt ignorant and indifferent. That mercy, which prevents the execution of neceſſary acts of juſtice, deſerves not the name of mercy. It is in fact cruelty. For it eventually proves an encouragement to ſin, not only to the individuals who are ſpared, but to myriads beſides.

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It is unfair indeed to reaſon merely from the ſuppoſable conſequences of ſuch a command. But if men will reaſon in this way, the proper queſtion is; Whether, upon the whole, the morals of the Iſraelites were more in danger of ſuffering from their execution of ſuch a ſentence, or from obſerving the impunity of the Canaanites? This queſtion admits of an eaſy anſwer. The objection is made to the command, from the idea of its eventually affecting one branch of morals only. But had the Canaanites been ſpared, the whole ſyſtem of morals would have ſuffered. God knew that the Iſraelites would ſoon become as corrupt as the nations among whom they dwelt. From the impunity of the Canaanites, they would have had too much ground to promiſe themſelves a ſimilar exemption, and to regard all the threatenings of their law as mere bugbears.

It may be ſaid, that if it was neceſſary, God could have deſtroyed the Canaanites, without employing the Iſraelites in this work. But thus the diſpenſation could not have had the ſame awful language, either to the Iſraelites, or to the heathen around. Had ordinary means been employed, the heathen might have aſcribed the deſtruction to their own offended deities.

There is every reaſon to believe, that the preſervation of the Canaanites would have had a far worſe effect on the Iſraelites, even with reſpect to humanity, than their deſtruction could have. For they would ſoon have imitated the wicked example of theſe nations in its full extent. Their hearts

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hearts would ſoon have been hardened, not only by the horrid influence of human ſacrifices, but by that of unnatural luſts. Theſe, it is well known, have a brutifying power on the mind of man, and render it callous to all the more generous feelings of our nature. The effect of ſuch abominable practices muſt neceſſarily have been permanent, becauſe they would have been continued from generation to generation. But whatever effect the extermination of the Canaanites may be ſuppoſed to have had on the immediate agents, its influence could not be ſo durable; becauſe the command was limited, and the deſtruction of conſequence only temporary.

We are ſtill to conſider the Iſraelites, as, in the whole of their obedience to this command, called immediately to view the authority of the Supreme Judge, who manifeſted his preſence by a continuation of miracles. For we cannot form a right eſtimate concerning this command, unleſs we conſider it in its connexion. Now, there was no room left for the exerciſe of their own corrupt paſſions. They were to act merely as the miniſters of divine juſtice. Such is the perverſeneſs of our nature, that the very idea of an abſolute command being interpoſed about any thing, makes that work ungrateful which might otherwiſe be agreeable. That God, who infinitely well knows all the ſecret ſprings of action in the human heart, knew that the Iſraelites, when required to deſtroy the devoted nations, as an indiſpenſable duty, would be reluctant to the work, and ſoon ſlacken

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in their obedience. That they did ſo, appears from the hiſtory. There is not the leaſt evidence that they contracted a ſanguinary diſpoſition, in conſequence of their partial execution of the divine ſentence. In as far as cruelty could be viewed as a trait in their national character, it originated in their imitation of the Canaanites, and muſt therefore be conſidered rather as the conſequence of ſparing that people. It was only from their being "mingled among the heathen, and "learning their works," that they "ſhed inno-"cent blood, even the blood of their ſons and "daughters [z]."

That ſuch a command would neceſſarily tend to make the Iſraelites cruel, is an inſufficient argument againſt its reality, becauſe it proves too much. For, admitting that they, in the whole execution of this ſentence, were bound to have their eye immediately directed to the authority of the Supreme Judge; if their obedience tended to harden their hearts, the very obſervation of God's conduct in providence muſt have a ſimilar influence on his rational creatures. For we ſee innumerable calamities brought on the human race, and extending even to thoſe who have never ſinned perſonally. Now, it muſt either be denied that theſe are the effects of providential operation, and of conſequence that God ruleth among men; or it muſt be granted that the objection under conſideration is a bad one. For what difference ſoever may be ſuppoſed as to degree, the perſuaſion

[z] Pſal. cvi. 35. 38.

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ſion of God's intervention by a poſitive *precept*, cannot, as to its tendency with reſpect to us, differ eſſentially from the perſuaſion of his operation in *fact*.

The deſtruction commanded is never repreſented as a pattern for their general conduct, but ſtill as ſomething peculiar and extraordinary. It is called "a terrible thing [a]." They were to view the ſeven nations as actually accurſed of God. Their very goods were accurſed, and ſubjected thoſe who ſhould take poſſeſſion of them to a curſe [b]. In the deſtruction of theſe nations, the Iſraelites were not called to work by themſelves. They were called to be "workers with God." He claims the work of "cutting off the Canaan-"ites [c]." He did every thing that could be done to convince his people that theſe nations were irrecoverably devoted. He ſent deſtroying inſects before them [d]. He made the walls of Jericho miraculouſly to fall to the ground, in conſequence of the blowing of horns. He made the ſun to ſtand ſtill, and he "caſt down great ſtones from hea-"ven" on the Canaanites [e].

The Iſraelites, as has been formerly obſerved, were not permitted to view any of the other heathen nations around in the ſame light. They were to offer peace to them; and even although they refuſed it, and reduced the Iſraelites to take their cities by ſtorm, they were not permitted to kill any but the grown males, that is, ſuch as

a Exod. xxxiv. 10. b Joſh. vii. 12, 13. 25. c Exod. xxiii. 23.
d Deut. vii. 20.; Joſh. xxiv. 12. e Joſh. x. 10.—13.

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bore arms againſt them. For then, every man, who was able to carry arms, was a ſoldier, eſpecially during a ſiege.

In a word, this command could not have the effect of making the Iſraelites cruel, becauſe any abuſe of it in this way was prevented by many precepts of a tendency directly contrary, which were bound on them by the ſame authority. We find no ancient laws ſo favourable to the intereſts of humanity as thoſe of the Jews. They were to bring back their enemy's aſs, if they ſaw him go aſtray, and to relieve him, if they ſaw him lying under his burden [f]. They were forbidden to retain the pledge of a poor man for a ſingle night [g]. Nor were they to confine theſe acts of humanity to their own nation. They were prohibited from injuring the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites, notwithſtanding all their unkindneſs. They were not to "abhor an Edomite," becauſe of their conſanguinity in their common parent Iſaac; nor to "abhor an Egyptian," becauſe they were ſtrangers in his land [h]. Here there was no room left for the diabolical principle of revenge. They were even commanded to "love "the ſtrangers as themſelves [i]:" and this character extended to all thoſe of other nations, who reſided among them, the Canaanites excepted; although they did not conform to the rites of the Jewiſh religion. Theſe, and many other precepts of a ſimilar tendency, they were bound to obey,

f Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. g Deut. xxiv. 10.—13. h Deut. xxiii. 7.
i Lev. xix. 34.

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obey, under peril of being given up of God to ſuch judgments as were brought by their inſtrumentality on the devoted nations. Nor did theſe threatenings fall to the ground. Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites, after they had been received into a ſtate of friendſhip with Iſrael, was ſeverely puniſhed, both on the nation, and on his own family.

One, who has lately profeſſed to elucidate the Holy Scriptures, by a new Tranſlation, has avowed that the only ſolution that can be given of the difficulty ariſing from the command to exterminate the Canaanites, is "to acknowledge, fairly "and openly, that the Jewiſh hiſtorians, both "here and in many other places, put in the "mouth of the LORD words, which he never "ſpake; and aſſign to him views and motives, "which he never had."

This is indeed to cut the Gordian knot; and, although he pretends the contrary, to unhinge the whole ſyſtem of inſpiration.

The objection, for removing which he reckons it neceſſary to make ſo ſtrange a conceſſion, is founded on a ſuppoſed inconſiſtency in the divine conduct, according to the account given in ſacred hiſtory. "The aſſertion," he ſays, "that God, "after giving ſo explicit a precept, and ordering "the Chanaanites to be extirpated, that they might "not become a ſnare to his people, ſhould yet pur-"poſely reſerve ſo great a number of thoſe ſame "Chanaanites, to be a ſnare, ſeems to affect both

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" his wiſdom and veracity.—If I be commanded " to deſtroy or remove the cauſe of temptation, " leſt I ſhould yield to it; and *at the ſame time* " be told that I can neither remove nor deſtroy " it; nay, that it is purpoſely left to tempt me; I " muſt doubt of the equity or the truth of the " tale.—Could the God of truth and wiſdom ſay " to the Iſraelites: " Deſtroy thoſe idolatrous na- " tions, leſt they ſeduce you into idolatry;" and " yet purpoſely reſerve them, to try whether the " Iſraelites would be ſeduced."—" I cannot bring " myſelf," he alſo ſays, " to believe that ſuch an " order proceeded from the mouth of God; per- " haps not even from the mouth of Moſes. I am " rather willing to ſuſpect, that it is the fabrica- " tion of ſome poſterior Jew, to juſtify the cruel- " ties of his nation [k]."

It is evident that this objection eſpecially reſts on a *fallacy* in the interpretation of the word *ſnare*. This learned writer uſes it, as if it invariably ſignified a *temptation* to ſin, or *cauſe* of temptation. It would, indeed, be difficult to prove, that it is inconſiſtent with the perfections of God, judicially to leave ſome things in the way of ſinners, which, he knows will, through their own depravity, prove occaſions of temptation. This is what he threatens, as the puniſhment of previous tranſgreſſion. But although, as has been ſeen, the word *ſnare* ſometimes denotes that which proves a temptation, it properly and principally ſignifies the cauſe of deſtruction; and in

[k] Geddes's Tranſl. of the Bible, Vol. II. Pref. ii.

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in all the places where it is uſed in relation to the point under conſideration, it has either an immediate or an ultimate reference to the puniſhment of ſin. The puniſhment, as denoted by this word, is ſometimes expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from the ſin: "They ſhall not dwell in thy land, leſt they make "thee ſin againſt me: for if thou ſerve other "gods, it will ſurely be a ſnare unto thee [l]." Here the ſin, and the ſnare, are mentioned diſtinctly; the latter, as denoting the puniſhment, and the former, its procuring cauſe. For it is undeniable, that the ſin meant is that of "ſerving their gods;" and this ſin, it is ſaid, "will ſurely be a ſnare," becauſe it would certainly expoſe them to puniſhment. To the ſame purpoſe, are the following words: "Thine eye ſhall have no pity upon "them: neither ſhalt thou ſerve their gods; for "that will be a ſnare unto thee [m]." It is not meant that the ſervice of their gods could be a "cauſe of temptation;" becauſe this is pointed out as itſelf the ſin, or compliance with the temptation, and ſo the cauſe of puniſhment. In the ſame ſenſe the Egyptians ſaid that Moſes was a ſnare to them; as being the cauſe of their deſtruction [n].

Here, alſo, a *falſe* repreſentation is given of the matter of *fact*. God did *not* command the Iſraelites to deſtroy or remove the cauſe of temptation, leſt they ſhould yield to it; and *at the ſame time* tell them, that they could neither remove nor deſtroy it, but that it was purpoſely left to

l Exod. xxiii. 33. m Deut. vii. 16. n Exod. x. 7. See alſo 1 Sam. xviii. 21.

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to tempt them. The objector, whether intentionally or not, I will not presume to say, confounds things with respect to *time*, which are kept totally distinct in the thread of the narrative. The Israelites were not informed, that the Canaanites were to be left for their punishment, till more than sixty years after they received the command to destroy them.

There is nothing here that can in any degree militate against the *veracity* of God. The precept was delivered, on their entry into the wilderness, as pointing out their duty; the declaration referred to was made, many years afterwards, as expressing God's displeasure with them, because of their neglect of duty, and the punishment to which, on this account, they were to be subjected.

Nor was it inconsistent with the veracity of God, to give an express command to his people, with respect to what they should do, and even *at the same time* to purpose in his own mind, that the event should be different. For the secret purpose of God was never intended as the rule of our duty. This is the very doctrine that Moses taught the Israelites, with respect to a similar judgment, that might afterwards be inflicted on them, in their being "rooted out of the land," like the nations that were before them. "The "secret things belong unto the LORD our God: "but those things which are revealed belong un- "to us, and to our children for ever, that we may "do

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"do all the words of this law [n]." The will of God's purpoſe is often very different from that of his precept, which is the only rule of our duty. It was the will of God's precept, inculcated on the Iſraelites for many centuries, and repeated in a great variety of forms, and by many meſſengers, that when the Meſſiah ſhould appear, they ſhould hear him in all things. This was enjoined on them under the ſevereſt penalties. Yet we are equally certain, that it was the will of his purpoſe, that they ſhould crucify him. Therefore ſaid the apoſtle Peter; "Him being deliver-
"ed by the *determinate counſel* and foreknowledge
"of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands
"have crucified and ſlain [o]."

Although he actually reſerved theſe nations for the puniſhment of his people, there was nothing in this inconſiſtent with his veracity. On the contrary, in this very manner was his veracity diſplayed. Whatever may be thought by ſelfiſh man, who views the divine conduct merely as it regards the creature; God finds his honour no leſs concerned in verifying his threatening, than in fulfilling his promiſe. When he commanded the Iſraelites to exterminate the Canaanites, he did not tell them, indeed, that he had immutably purpoſed that this ſhould not be the caſe. But he *at the ſame time* warned them of the danger of diſobedience. He ſaid; "Take heed to thyſelf,
"leſt thou make a covenant with the inhabitants
"of the land,—leſt it be for a ſnare in the midſt
"of

n Deut. xxix. 28, 29. o Acts ii. 23.

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"of thee [p]." He expreſsly threatened, that this ſhould eventually be a ſnare, as ſubjecting them to the deſerved puniſhment; as in a paſſage formerly quoted, "It will ſurely be a ſnare unto "thee [q]." When, therefore, he afterwards ſpared theſe nations, it was an illuſtration of his veracity, in the fulfilment of the threatening.

The whole conduct aſcribed to God in this matter, was not leſs conſiſtent with divine *wiſdom*. His judgments are ſo myſterious, that we cannot pretend fully to explain them. But ſo much is clearly made known, that Wiſdom muſt be "juſtified of all her children." God had indeed determined, that theſe nations ſhould not be totally exterminated, even before he gave the command to Iſrael to execute his vengeance. But he had determined this, only in a certain connexion; as what ſhould eventually prove the juſt puniſhment of Iſrael's diſobedience. It is one of the modes adopted by infinite wiſdom, in the ordinary courſe of providential diſpenſation, to make the puniſhment of the ſinner to ariſe from his ſin, or from that which hath been the occaſion of it. Thus it is ſaid; "Thine own wickedneſs "ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall re-"prove thee [r]." We cannot conceive that ſin could be puniſhed in any way, more to the honour of divine wiſdom. For as, in this manner, God manifeſts that, notwithſtanding the atheiſtical ſuggeſtions of the heart, he marks the ſin; he no

p Exod. xxxiv. 12. q Exod. xxiii. 33. r Jer. ii. 19.

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no leſs clearly ſhews the deſign of the judgment inflicted.

Referring to what has been replied to this objection, that it was becauſe of breach of covenant that God would not henceforth drive out the nations from before the Iſraelites, this author further ſays; "The precept, it is confeſſed, was poſitive and abſolute; but the promiſe of power to fulfil it, was limited and conditional. It was not until after the Iſraelites had forſaken the LORD, and worſhipped other gods, that the LORD would no more enable them to expel the Chanaanites.—That is to ſay, the LORD would not enable them to remove, or break the ſnare, until after they had fallen into it; and when they have fallen into it, he reproaches them for the non-execution of his precept: and ſays, the ſnare ſhall remain to prove them [s]."

The inference which this writer attempts to deduce, that "the LORD would not enable them to remove, or break the ſnare, *until* after they had fallen into it," as it is evidently meant to exhibit the ſcriptural hiſtory in a ridiculous light, is entirely ſophiſtical. The author throws darkneſs on the paſſage, which may thus tend to bewilder the reader, by the inſertion of the particle *until*. He alſo recurs to his fallacy in the uſe of the term *ſnare*, employing it throughout the ſentence, as if it muſt neceſſarily bear the ſame meaning; whereas the ſnare into which "they had "fallen," had a relation to ſin, and that which was

[s] Geddes's Tranſl. Pref. p. iii.

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was not to be broken, to punishment. The inference, indeed, is altogether false. For the LORD did still "enable them to break the snare, *until* "they fell into it;" that is, he gave them success against the Canaanites, until they wilfully disobeyed his commandment, and apostatized to their idolatrous courses. Then, indeed, he would no longer "enable them to remove or break the "snare," because by their sin they had brought this snare upon them, in respect of judgment. This, then, is the only conclusion that can fairly be deduced from the premises:—God would not remove the punishment, *after* they had fallen into that sin, with which it was inseparably connected, according to the threatening.

God had promised to Moses, with respect to those nations; "No man shall be able to stand "before thee, until thou hast destroyed them [s]." But, according to the Sacred History, no breach of promise is ascribed to God. For this objector himself acknowledges, that "the promise of "power—was limited and conditional." The accomplishment of it depended on their adherence to the worship of JEHOVAH.

This writer adds a question, for confirming his objection: "Why was it," that is, the snare, "not completely removed in the days "of Joshua, and of his contemporary elders, "during a period of twenty-five years, when "the people had not abandoned the worship "of the LORD [t]?" It might be a sufficient answer to this cavil, to say, that although God had

[s] Deut. vii. 24. [t] Geddes's Transl. Pref. p. iii.

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had ſeen meet to make trial of their fidelity to him, for the ſpace of *twenty-five years*, before he gave them full poſſeſſion of the land of promiſe, no one could juſtly have ſaid that the trial was either long or ſevere; eſpecially as he had ſo recently atteſted the religion given them, by the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles, continued for a longer time than this, and wrought at the expence, not merely of the nations that oppoſed them, but alſo of their gods.

But, according to the narrative, no room is left for this queſtion. Although God had promiſed to caſt out the nations, if his people adhered to him, he had never pledged himſelf to do it all at once. It was his will to call them to the exerciſe both of faith and patience; and in this reſpect, his conduct was alſo marked with mercy. To Moſes he had ſaid, "I will not drive them out before "thee in one year, leſt the land become deſolate, "and the beaſt of the field multiply againſt thee. "By little and little I will drive them out before "thee, until thou be increaſed, and inherit the "land [u]."

I ſhall only add, that, according to this writer, there is reaſon to ſuſpect, that what is called the command of God to exterminate the Canaanites, "is the fabrication of ſome poſterior Jew, to juſ-"tify the cruelties of his nation." But let the Gibeonites reply to this objection. If the Iſraelites were ſo cruel, why did they ſpare that people more than the reſt? Did they in this inſtance deviate

[u] Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. See alſo Deut. vii. 22.

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viate from their ſanguinary courſe, becauſe the Gibeonites practiſed on them a groſs impoſition, not attributed to any of their neighbours? Or, did they ſpare them for ſlaves? If ſo, how were they ſatisfied with ſo few? Why did they prefer them collectively to any individuals of the other nations? It is impoſſible, indeed, to find any good reaſon for the preſervation of this people; unleſs we admit, according to the ſcriptural narrative, that the execution of the precept was ſuſpended in this ſingle inſtance, in conſideration of the oath taken, in the name of JEHOVAH, by Joſhua and the princes of Iſrael [v].

Did the hiſtorian inform us that the Iſraelites were eager to enter on the poſſeſſion of Canaan, and to deſtroy all the nations ſaid to be devoted; did he inform us, that they actually did ſo, being more afraid of having ſuch dangerous neighbours than of meeting them at once in battle; we might diſcern ſome reaſon for ſuppoſing that he had recourſe to a pretended mandate from heaven for excuſing their ſeverity. But we are told, on the contrary, that they were very reluctant to enter into Canaan; that their leaders eagerly ſwallowed an impoſture which prevented the execution of the ſentence on one body of people; nay, that the Iſraelites in general did not obey the command of God in deſtroying theſe nations, although their diſobedience deprived them of the poſſeſſion of their lands, and expoſed them to many dangers. We accordingly find the guilt of this diſobedience

[v] Joſh. ix. 15.—20.

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obedience often charged upon them by God, and confeſſed by themſelves in ſucceeding generations [w].

Had we been informed that the Gibeonites impoſed on Joſhua and the princes, and that they or the people diſregarded the oath as contrary to an expreſs command, and gave up the Gibeonites to the ſword; it might have been argued with ſome degree of plauſibility, that this command was a mere pretence for the indulgence of their ſanguinary diſpoſitions. But when we learn that Joſhua and the princes conſidered their oath as ſuſpending the execution of the commanded deſtruction, and that the congregation ſubmitted to this; we ſee no ground for the charge of cruelty; we perceive the greateſt reaſon for crediting the hiſtory in all its circumſtances. They diſcover that dread of a ſolemn oath which characterizes all conſcientious perſons; and will rather diſpenſe with a poſitive precept than with a moral one; being more afraid of divine *wrath* on account of perjury, than of the conſequences threatened in caſe of their not obeying the command to deſtroy the Canaanites [x].

The hiſtory of the deſtruction of theſe nations, was "written for our admonition." It exhibits the juſtice, the ſovereignty, and the wiſdom of God, in a very ſtriking light. It in a ſpecial manner points out to us the hatefulneſs of ſin to a God of infinite purity; and teaches us that we ought to hate it "with a perfect hatred!" Were God's

w Pſal. cvi. 34, &c. x Joſh. ix. 20.

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ancient people typical of his ſpiritual Iſrael? Their enemies were alſo figures of ours. God hath ſet before us all the good of the land of promiſe. He calls us to go up and inherit it. But he aſſures us at the ſame time, that we muſt fight our way through an hoſt of powerful enemies. Our luſts, like the nations of Canaan, ſeek to keep us from that inheritance which the LORD hath given us. But he commands us to deſtroy them utterly, to make no covenant with them, to have no mercy upon them; aſſuring us that if we ſpare them, they will prove a ſnare to us, and lead us aſtray to ſerve their gods. What are the gods which theſe Canaanites ſerve? They ſerve Mammon, "this preſent evil world;" Aſhtaroth, the goddeſs of Pleaſure; Satan, "the god of this "world." What is our conduct? Like the Iſraelites, we obey the command of our God only in a partial way. He enjoins us to "crucify the "fleſh, with its affections and luſts, that the body "of ſin may be deſtroyed, that henceforth we "may not ſerve ſin." He gives us Jeſus as "the "Captain of our ſalvation," and promiſes ſtrength for fighting his battles. But we make little progreſs in this war. We often make a truce with our ſpiritual enemies. This is our folly and guilt. But God, in his infinite wiſdom and holineſs, overrules our conduct for his own glory and our good. He leaves a remnant of the devoted nations to prove us. He "ſlays them not" entirely, "leſt "his people ſhould forget." He "deſtroys them "by little and little." At length, "there ſhall "be

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" be no more the Canaanite in the houſe of the " LORD of hoſts."

SECTION VII.

On Divine Sovereignty;—in Creation;—in the Management of the Natural World;—in the Time appropriated to the Worſhip of God;—in the Permiſſion of the Entrance of Sin;—in the Frame of the Covenant of Works;—in God's Conduct towards Angels;—in the Choice of Iſrael;—in the Diſtinction of Nations with reſpect to External Means of Salvation.

To no perfection of the divine nature, do men ſhow greater antipathy than to that of ſovereignty. This not only appears by their refuſing to ſubmit to the grace of God, but by their reluctance to his precept, and their rebellion againſt his providence. Man ſtrives with his Maker for the dominion, with reſpect to his faith, his practice, and even his lot. He will acknowledge both juſtice and mercy, in the divine nature; he cannot, however, accede to the ſovereignty of God in the exerciſe of theſe perfections. But ſovereignty is impreſſed, in the moſt legible characters, not only on the word, but on the works of God. Wherever we turn, it meets our eye. Do we en-

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deavour to draw a veil over this ungrateful attribute, as clearly revealed in the doctrines of revelation? It arreſts our attention in the hiſtories. Do we attempt to throw it out of our eternal intereſts? We muſt acknowledge its influence, however reluctantly, in every thing that concerns us for time. Do we exclude it from the affairs of men? We ſee it written in the fate of angels. Do we baniſh it from earth? We find it enthroned in heaven. The Pſalmiſt, therefore, in celebrating this perfection, exhibits in one view the various parts of the univerſe, as harmonizing in its praiſe: "Whatſoever the LORD *pleaſed*, that "did he in heaven, and in earth, in the ſeas, and "in all deep places [y]." Does he, who bears the name of Chriſtian, refuſe to join in the aſcription? Let him go and learn the truth from a heathen. Let him liſten to the inſtructions of the wiſer Nebuchadnezzar: "All the inhabitants of the earth "are reputed as nothing: and he doth according "to his will in the army of heaven, and among "the inhabitants of the earth: and none can ſtay "his hand, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou [z]?"

As the corruptions of men are moſt deeply engaged againſt the work of redemption, the greateſt oppoſition to divine ſovereignty appears in this quarter. Here it more directly oppoſes the pride of reaſon, and the pride of will. Beſides, the enemies of the goſpel eſpecially aim their ſhafts againſt divine ſovereignty, as diſplayed in our ſalvation. Hence are men ſtaggered and overpowered;

[y] Pſal. cxxxv. 6. [z] Dan. iv. 35.

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ed; and perhaps proceed to deny that very perfection, the operation of which they are forced to acknowledge in almoſt every other of the works of God.

It may, therefore, tend to throw light on this important ſubject, to conſider the diſplay which is made of the ſovereignty of God in *other works*, beſides that of ſalvation, and in a variety of *circumſtances*, evidently recorded in Scripture in ſubſerviency to this.

A particular illuſtration of this perfection is the more neceſſary, becauſe, unleſs we have juſt ideas of it, we cannot think juſtly with reſpect to any other perfection of God. How eager have earthly princes been to render themſelves abſolute! The richneſs of their revenues, the love of their ſubjects, or the extent of their conqueſts, have often been viewed as no counterbalance to the want of unlimited authority. Ahab was miſerable, becauſe he met with reſiſtance from the poſſeſſor of one poor vineyard: and Jezebel, his wife, ſeemed to think, that his royalty did not deſerve the name, if he could not gratify himſelf in this inſtance. "Doſt thou now," ſhe ſays, "govern the kingdom "of Iſrael[a]?" Has not many a prince cheerfully hazarded his crown for the mere poſſibility of enjoying abſolute ſway? This is the groſſeſt arrogance in man, who is a worm. But ſovereign authority is eſſential to the majeſty of God. His will is not influenced by any cauſe without himſelf. But we are by no means to form our judgment

a 1 Kings xxi. 7.

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of divine ſovereignty, by comparing it with the arbitrary will of a ſinful creature. For God never exerciſes his ſovereignty without a proper end. He is entirely ſovereign in the diſplay of his perfections, and in the manner and degree in which he diſplays them. But his ſovereignty is conſtantly exerciſed according to the rule of his perfections. It is always in entire conſiſtency with his holineſs and juſtice, wiſdom and goodneſs. While ſovereignty is ſtill regulated by theſe perfections, it lends them a peculiar luſtre. It is the royal ſplendour of all the other attributes of God. Suppoſe him to be poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfections, and yet to act neceſſarily in the diſplay of theſe; it would greatly derogate from their glory. We could not, indeed, acknowledge him as the Supreme Being. By this, more than by any of his moral perfections, he is diſtinguiſhed from every creature, even the moſt exalted. To "do "*his* pleaſure," is the higheſt honour to which any creature is advanced [b]. But the Almighty diſplays his ſelf-exiſtence and independence, by ſtill doing what pleaſes himſelf. When, therefore, the Church teſtifies her aſſurance, "that the LORD is great, "and that our LORD is above all gods;" this is the evidence that ſhe immediately produces, He "hath done whatſoever he pleaſed [c]."

1. The work of *Creation*, in various reſpects, unfolds this attribute. He, who is Being itſelf, was under no neceſſity of nature to communicate being to any other. He is equally independent of

b Pſal. ciii. 21. c Pſal. cxxxv. 5, 6.

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of all creatures for his bleſſedneſs, as for his being. The poſſeſſion of thouſands of worlds cannot in the leaſt enrich him. The praiſes of myriads of men or angels can make no addition to his felicity. Why, then, did he create the univerſe? Juſt becauſe he pleaſed. The ſovereignty of his pleaſure, as diſplayed in the work of creation, is inſeparably connected with the work itſelf, as an equally cogent reaſon for the higheſt praiſe. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and "honour, and power: for thou haſt created all "things, and *for thy pleaſure* they are, and were "created [d]." He did not create, without an end worthy of himſelf. He propoſed the manifeſtation of his infinite wiſdom, power and goodneſs. On the ſuppoſition of his engaging in this work, he could have no other end in view. But ſtill his creating, with this very deſign, was the reſult of a ſovereign act of his will. For he did not ſtand in need of any external manifeſtation of his perfections; his bleſſedneſs conſiſting in the eternal contemplation of theſe, in his own infinite mind.

Is it inquired, why God did not begin to create, till within leſs than ſix thouſand years back from the preſent time, when it was in his power to have given a far earlier diſplay of his perfections? Or why, when he had exiſted from eternity alone, he in time gave being to creatures formed for fellowſhip with him? It may indeed be ſaid, that no finite nature can exiſt from eternity; and that, although the moſt remote period, which the mind

d Rev. iv. 11.

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of man can conceive, had been fixed on by God as the date of creation, it would not have approached nearer to eternity than did the actual era of creation. But ſtill the principal ſolution is, that this was the divine pleaſure.

Is it aſked, Why did he extend or confine his work to ſix days? Why hath he formed ſuch a certain number of creatures, and neither more nor fewer? Why hath he given being to many, for which we can diſcern no uſe? to many, the exiſtence of which has moſt probably never been learned, that are hid in the abyſſes of the ſea, and therefore cannot be the means of diſplaying his perfections? To theſe queſtions, and to others innumerable which might be propoſed, we muſt ſtill give the ſame anſwer, "The Lord hath done "whatſoever he pleaſed,—in the ſeas, and in all "deep places."

Man and beaſt, as to the bodily part, acknowledge the ſame humble origin. "God ſaid, Let "the earth bring forth the living creature after "his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beaſt of "the earth after his kind.—And the Lord God "formed man of the duſt of the ground[e]." That ſame duſt of which God formed man, and which he animated with a rational and immortal ſpirit, conformed to his own image, might, with equal propriety, had he ſo pleaſed, gone to the formation of the vileſt reptile that crawls on the earth; and the duſt of which that reptile is compoſed, might have conſtituted the corporeal part of man. But

e Gen. i. 24.; ii. 7.

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But in this reſpect the Almighty Potter hath manifeſted his "power over the clay, of the ſame "lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and an-"other unto diſhonour [f]." And ſhall we dare to aſſign limits to his ſovereignty? Shall we ſay to this glorious agent, "Hitherto ſhalt thou come, "and no further?" Shall we admit his ſovereignty in the old creation, and refuſe it in the new? Shall we acknowledge his right to do with that, which was negatively innocent, as he pleaſed; and deny him the ſame right as to that which had actually offended him? When the whole lump of our nature is corrupted by ſin, ſhall we preſume to ſay to him; "Thou mayeſt not do according to thy "pleaſure; but muſt be determined by the will "of the clay?" Shall we not rather adopt the acknowledgment of the Church? "Now, O LORD, "thou art our father: we are the clay, and thou "our Potter, and we all are the work of thy "hand [g]." If we refuſe this ſubmiſſion, we may be aſſured that he ſhall "daſh us in pieces as a "potter's veſſel." For "wo unto him that ſtri-"veth with his Maker: let the potſherd ſtrive with "the potſherds of the earth: ſhall the clay ſay to "him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou? or "thy work, He hath no hands? Wo unto him that "ſaith unto his father, What begetteſt thou? or "to the woman, What haſt thou brought forth [h]?" Would ſuch queſtions, if addreſſed to our earthly parents, argue the moſt daring impiety? What terms ſhall we find for expreſſing their wickedneſs,

f Rom. ix. 21. g Iſa. lxiv. 8. h Chap. xlv. 9. 10.

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neſs, when directed to the Almighty Parent himſelf? Of what account is the clay to the potter? If "the veſſel, that he made of it, be marred in "his hand, he makes it again another veſſel, as "*ſeems good* to the potter to make it." Thus doth the LORD addreſs us; "O houſe of Iſrael, "cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, "as the clay is in the potter's hand, ſo are ye in "mine hand, O houſe of Iſrael[i]." Man is a very important being in his own eye. But doth this increaſe his conſequence with his Maker? On the contrary, "all the inhabitants of the earth are "reputed as nothing[k]." "Behold, the nations are "as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the "ſmall duſt of the balance: behold, he taketh "up the iſles as a very little thing.—All nations "before him are as nothing, and they are counted "to him leſs than nothing, and vanity[l]."

2. This perfection is very apparent in the whole management of the world of *nature*. Often indeed does God employ the elements as the inſtruments of his juſtice. But in his ordinary adminiſtration, they are to be viewed as the monitors of his ſovereignty. "Fire, hail, ſnow, va-"pour, ſtormy wind, fulfil his word[m]." He not only, for judgment, "cauſeth it to rain on one "city, and not on another[n];" but, becauſe it is his pleaſure, he cauſeth "it to rain on the earth "where no man is, on the wilderneſs wherein "there is no man[o]." "He ſendeth forth his com-"mandment

i Jer. xviii. 4.—6. k Dan. iv. 35. l Iſa. xl. 15.—17.
m Pſal. cxlviii. 8. n Amos iv. 7. o Job xxxviii. 26.

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" mandment upon earth; his word runneth very " ſwiftly. He giveth ſnow like wool; he ſcat- " tereth the hoar-froſt like aſhes. He caſteth " forth his ice like morſels; who can ſtand be- " fore his cold? He ſendeth out his word, and " melteth them: he cauſeth his wind to blow, " and the waters flow." All theſe are effects of his ſovereignty in the natural kingdom; and his conduct in the world of grace is ſtrictly analogous. For it immediately follows; " He ſhew- " eth his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and his " judgments unto Iſrael. He hath not dealt ſo " with any nation: and as for his judgments, " they have not known them [p]."

3. God hath diſplayed his ſovereignty in conſecrating the *ſeventh* part of our *time* to his ſervice. The worſhip of rational creatures is founded on the nature of God. But the limitation of the time, to be devoted to his ſervice, depends upon his will. He might have reſtricted the labour of man to five days, or extended it to ſeven. He might have claimed ſix parts of our time, and allowed us only the ſeventh to ourſelves. In this caſe, we could have had no right to complain; for he would have ordered matters ſo, that, what part of our time ſoever was devoted to work, would have been ſufficient for our ſuſtenance. The reaſon aſſigned for the conſecration of a ſeventh portion of our time, is God's working ſix days, and reſting on the ſeventh [q]. But this is only to be viewed as the immediate reaſon. As his

[p] Pſal. cxlvii. 15.—20. [q] Gen. ii. 2, 3.

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his working exactly ſix days depended on his ſovereign pleaſure; to the ſame ſource muſt the ſanctification of a ſeventh part of our time be ultimately traced. For he previouſly determined, in the immutable counſel of his will, to work only ſix days, to reſt on the ſeventh, and therefore to appropriate this portion of time to his worſhip.

4. God hath ſignally diſplayed his ſovereignty in permitting the *entrance* of *ſin*. It would be every way unworthy of God, to ſuppoſe that he could not have prevented this. He, who formed intelligent creatures after his own image, could as eaſily have ſecured them in the poſſeſſion of this ſtate of integrity, without a poſſibility of falling. Had he pleaſed, ſin would have been unknown both to angels and to men. We may be aſſured, therefore, that he had a proper end in view in determining the permiſſion of this greateſt of evils. Reaſon itſelf teaches us, that whatever is permitted by the moral Governor of the world muſt be for the beſt. Scripture confirms its voice, by informing us that God maketh "the very wrath "of man to praiſe him." We may therefore reſt ſatisfied, that, in his infinite wiſdom, he ſaw that he could bring greater glory to himſelf even by means of ſin, than if it had never been permitted. He knew that there would be an opportunity for the diſplay of perfections, which otherwiſe, although revealed, could never have been exerciſed;—for the diſplay of juſtice in the puniſhment of ſin, or of mercy in the pardon of it, or of both with

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with reſpect to different objects. But his knowledge of the poſſibility of this, laid him under no neceſſity as to the event. Was it an act of his ſovereign will to manifeſt his perfections at all? It was no leſs a ſovereign act to determine that they ſhould be diſplayed in this particular way, as the conſequence of the entrance of ſin. Had he ſeen meet to reſtrict himſelf to that diſplay of his perfections which was conſiſtent with a ſtate of univerſal innocency, no one could have had a right to find fault. Although millions of intelligent creatures ſuffer, in conſequence of his permitting the entrance of ſin, no one may dare to complain. For, "who hath enjoined him his way? "or who can ſay, Thou haſt wrought iniquity [r]."

Again, the meaſure of this evil is entirely the reſult of his ſovereign pleaſure. He might have ſuffered ſin to enter among angels, and prevented its introduction into our lower world. Or he might have permitted this rebellion on his foot-ſtool, and prevented the poſſibility of its raiſing its head around his throne. It might have been ſo ordered, that only a part of the human race ſhould have been involved in rebellion; while the integrity of others might have been ſecured, like that of holy angels. Nay, he might have ſuffered the evil to extend as far in heaven as it hath done on earth, and given it that reſtraint on earth which it hath had in heaven. Various conjectures may be offered as to the reaſons of the divine conduct in theſe reſpects; and various reflections may

[r] Job xxxvi. 23.

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may be made, illuſtrating its infinite propriety. But all theſe things muſt be ultimately reſolved into the pleaſure of Him who "worketh all things "after the counſel of his own will[s]."

We may add, that one great end for which God hath permitted the entrance of this greateſt of evils, is deeply to impreſs rational creatures with a ſenſe of this adorable perfection. It might have been manifeſted in a variety of inſtances, although ſin had never entered. It was, as has been ſeen, actually manifeſted before the entrance of ſin. But, had not the eternal intereſts of intelligent creatures immediately depended on the exerciſe of this perfection, it could never have appeared with ſuch glory and majeſty.

5. The ſovereignty of God eminently appears in *ſuſpending* the whole happineſs of mankind on the *conduct* of *one* perſon. This perfection, indeed, is not the only one that may be traced in the federal character given to our common parent. If we take a juſt view of it, we ſhall perceive a ſtriking diſplay of divine grace. The carnal heart, which ſtill reflects on the ways of God, may be apt to accuſe his juſtice, and to inſinuate, that matters had been ſet on a better footing for the human race, if the happineſs or miſery of every individual had depended on his own conduct; that, in this caſe, although many, "like Adam," might "have tranſgreſſed the covenant," it is improbable that all would have done ſo; that, at any rate, the fall, and the conſequent miſery of ſome,

[s] Eph. i. 11.

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ſome, would have deterred others from following their example. But every one knows, that there is no tie which more powerfully reſtrains man than a regard to his offspring; that this will influence, when every other conſideration is ineffectual. And ſurely, there never was a parent who felt the force of this obligation ſo powerfully as Adam. He felt it in all its ſinleſs purity, and in all its poſſible extent. His individual intereſt was not merely at ſtake. He ſaw countleſs millions of his poſterity looking up to him as the truſtee of their happineſs, or as the cauſe of their miſery, not for time only, but for eternity. He knew that every one of theſe, in their ſucceſſive generations, would either riſe up and call him bleſſed, or accuſe him as the murderer of his offspring.

But although we have abundant reaſon to admire the grace of God in this tranſaction, it alſo bears a ſtriking impreſs of ſovereignty. It flowed from the nature of God, that, when he formed a rational creature, he ſhould give him a law, But his entering into covenant with man was the reſult of his pleaſure. He might have made a covenant with Adam, without the idea of repreſentation; or he might have extended it to all, ſo that the condition ſhould have reſpected every one in an individual capacity. He doth not aſk the conſent of all whom this covenant concerns. As the Lord of all, he ſubjects them to it in their common parent. He doth not even require the formal conſent of the common repreſentative. As

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a ſovereign, he promulgates the covenant in the form of a command: "The LORD God *command-* "*ed* the man [t]." He denies liberty to his creature to diſpute his authority. He knew that an innocent creature could not do ſo. The time, limited for probation, depended alſo entirely on his will. He might either make this known to Adam, or conceal it from him, as he pleaſed.

6. He ſignally diſplayed his ſovereignty in immediately ſuſpending the happineſs of man on obedience to a *poſitive* precept. "The LORD God "commanded the man, ſaying, Of every tree of "the garden thou mayeſt freely eat; but of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou "ſhalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou "eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die [u]." Had man tranſgreſſed any precept of the moral law, his fall would have been no leſs certain. But why make a regard to this poſitive injunction the turning hinge of his obedience? Why not rather reſt it on a moral precept, the reaſonableneſs of which would have been more evident to man, as flowing from the nature of his Creator; while the idea of diſobedience might have affected his mind with greater horror? Here God manifeſted his abſolute authority. Had he fixed on a moral, rather than on a poſitive precept, the reaſonableneſs of the thing itſelf might have ſeemed to be the origin of the obligation. But God would teach his creature, that *his* will was the formal reaſon of obedience; and that man was equally bound to

[t] Gen. ii. 16. [u] Gen. ii. 16, 17.

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to obey, where he saw no abstract reason for the duty, as where he did. Whence we may observe by the way, that moral obligation is not founded on what some call "the fitness of things," but on the will of the Supreme Lawgiver; and that this can be known to us only in consequence of his being pleased to reveal it. God makes man lord of the lower creation. But he must know, that his dominion is limited, and that absolute sovereignty is the prerogative of his Maker alone. He gives him power over all things in this world, but one. A single tree shows the limitation of his authority. The more paltry the object, the more striking the display of divine dominion. This is a tree, not without Eden, or in an obscure corner of it, but "in the midst of the garden." It must be still in his eye, or in his way, while he is engaged about his work; that it may still remind him of the sovereignty of God, and of his own dependence. The authority of the Lawgiver must be no less the reason of his faith, than of his obedience. Nothing in the appearance of the tree could indicate that fatal tendency ascribed to it; but every thing quite the contrary. For "it was "good for food, and pleasant to the eyes[v]." Yet man is bound to believe that the taste of this tree is mortal, because God hath said it. He must rather discredit the evidence of his own senses, than that of God. His understanding must refuse to hear their testimony, however plausible, in contradiction to the divine.

[v] Gen. iii. 6.

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7. The divine conduct with respect to *angels* contains a striking display of sovereignty. God, in his eternal purpose, chose some angels, and rejected others. We accordingly read of *elect* angels. Thus Paul addresses Timothy; "I charge "thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and "the elect angels [w]." On them he determined to confer an eternity of holiness and felicity; while he decreed to permit the fall of myriads of others, and to leave them in their state of guilt and misery. These, whom he suffered to fall, and whom he cast off for ever, were by nature as pure and perfect as those who "kept their first estate." Hence it is evident, that they were chosen, not because of any superior excellency, but merely from distinguishing love. Their standing, while others fell, must be ultimately resolved into the purpose of God, pre-ordaining that they should stand. For nothing takes place in time, but in consequence of an unalterable decree from eternity.

It pleased God to display the sovereignty of his will, not merely with respect to his creatures as fallen, but with respect to them as innocent. He willed to show, not only that, as transgressors, they could not make themselves to differ; but that, as sinless creatures, their standing primarily depended on an act of his sovereign pleasure. We are bound, indeed, to believe, that both those angels who apostatized, and man, had abstractedly a sufficiency of grace for obedience, if they inclined to

[w] 1 Tim. v. 21.

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to exercise it. But they could not continue in the proper exercise of their freedom of will, unless God willed that they should do so. For "in him "we are moved [x]." As the creature cannot resist the divine will, as little can he effectually will any thing, unless it be the pleasure of God that the event shall certainly take place.

It therefore appears, that God absolutely decreed the permission of sin, in order to illustrate the glory of his own sovereignty and independence, as contrasted with the mere dependence of his most exalted creatures; to shew that, in their most perfect state, they are indebted to him, not only for their faculties, but for the proper exercise of them in every instance; and that even when they have happiness in their own hands, they cannot keep it, except the Supreme Lord efficaciously will that this shall be the case. He suffered his most holy creatures to manifest their comparative imperfection, for the illustration of his own absolute and immutable perfection. "Be- "hold, he put no trust in his servants, and his an- "gels he charged with folly [y]." Thus he makes it evident, that the greatest glory of the creature consists, not in his will being independent of God's, but in its being so determined and influenced by his, that the creature cannot possibly choose what is evil. For surely, an elect angel, who cannot sin, is in a state of higher perfection than one, who, although free from sin, might be a devil the next moment. The creature is never so like his

x Acts xvii. 28. y Job iv. 18.

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Maker, as when, by a ſovereign act of the divine will, he is unalterably determined to good. That freedom of will which Adam had, and which many of his fallen race lay claim to, although it may ſeem more remote from dependence, is nearer to ſin. It has the ſemblance of a greater conformity to the ſovereignty of God. But it has nothing more. For the abſolute ſovereignty of his will is inſeparably connected with the immutability of his nature. While he does whatſoever he wills, he cannot will to do what is inconſiſtent with his infinite holineſs.

We may obſerve, by the way, the abſurdity of the doctrine of thoſe who aſſert, that God has given to all, who hear the goſpel, a ſufficiency of grace to believe and repent, if they will. For if God does not effectually will that they ſhall believe and repent, all this pretended ſufficiency of grace muſt be to no purpoſe. It is alſo evident, that the ſtate of every believer in Chriſt is more ſecure than was that of the firſt Adam. For the will of the Chriſtian, by the unalterable purpoſe and almighty power of God, is unchangeably, although in this life imperfectly, determined to good; whereas that of our common repreſentative, although perfect, was mutable.

The ſame ſovereignty appears, when we conſider the *way* in which they are brought to confirmation in their ſtate of bleſſedneſs. Had God pleaſed, he might have permitted their apoſtacy, as well as that of the other "ſons of God." Such was his conduct towards all the "veſſels of mercy" among

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among the human race. Their fall muſt be preparatory to a more glorious riſing. But while he glorifies his ſovereignty, he will do it in a variety of ways, whether mercy or juſtice be the end. While he is pleaſed to ſave ſome loſt ſinners of mankind, he chooſes rather to preſerve a part of the angelic family from being loſt.

But perhaps the ſovereignty of God moſt ſignally appears in the rejection of *all* the fallen angels. "God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, "but caſt them down to hell, and delivered them "into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto "judgment[z]." "The angels which kept not their "firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he "hath reſerved in everlaſting chains, under dark-"neſs, unto the judgment of the great day[a]." Here the diſplay of ſovereignty appears more ſtriking, if we contraſt with this his conduct towards many of the human race. They have become partners with devils in their guilt and condemnation; yet they are objects of mercy. Although, in the ſcale of being, the human nature is far inferior to the angelic; men are "redeemed from "the loweſt hell," while this is the portion of all the fallen angels. Theſe *morning-ſtars* are covered with everlaſting darkneſs, and worms of the duſt are exalted in their ſtead. No Saviour is provided for a ſuperior nature; yet the eternal Word becomes fleſh. "For verily he took not "upon him the nature of angels, but the ſeed "of Abraham[b]." Angels are eternally puniſhed

z 2 Pet. ii. 4. a Jude 6. b Heb. ii. 16.

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for one tranſgreſſion. Men, whoſe iniquities are more than the hairs upon their heads, are pardoned. Mercy is not once exhibited to one angel that fell; while thoſe ſinners of the human family, who have a thouſand times rejected this gracious exhibition, are eventually "brands plucked "out of the fire."

The ingenuity of man has deviſed various reaſons for the divine conduct in this reſpect. It has been ſuppoſed, that God might chooſe rather to ſave fallen man than fallen angels, becauſe the latter ſinned without any temptation; whereas man was caught in the ſnare of the devil. It has been ſaid, that there was not the ſame reaſon for the recovery of any of the angelic family, becauſe the apoſtacy did not extend to them all. Various conjectures of a ſimilar kind have been made. But we can give no other reaſon for God's paſſing by all fallen angels, while he fixed his love on ſome of our rebellious race, than that which we have in the language of Nebuchadnezzar: "He doth according to his will in the army of "heaven[c]." *Legions* of this army rebelled againſt their LORD. Had he pleaſed, he could have delivered them from their guilt, and reſtored them to obedience. But it was *his will* that they ſhould eternally reap the fruits of their diſobedience.

If "he doth according to his will in the army "of heaven," who can deny his right to do ſo— "among the inhabitants of this earth?" If God might

[c] DAN. iv. 35.

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might chooſe ſome angels, and reject others, may he not act the ſame part with reſpect to men? If there was no injuſtice or partiality in his conduct towards theſe "ſons of God;" can his conduct be unjuſt or partial in making a ſovereign diſtinction among the ſons of Adam? If the one was not inconſiſtent with his infinite goodneſs, how can ſuch inconſiſtency appear with reſpect to the other? Let fallen angels complain, if any of them can preſume ſo far; becauſe they are all left to periſh, while many of the human race are ſaved. "But who art thou, O *man*, who replieſt againſt "God?" Might he not with equal juſtice have condemned the whole of this race, as all the apoſtate angels? If he is pleaſed to ſave any, although mercy be not extended to all, what right haſt thou to arraign his conduct? May he not do with his own as he pleaſeth? If thou wilt oppoſe divine ſovereignty, do it conſiſtently. Before thou denieſt the doctrine of a ſovereign choice among men, tell thy Maker to his face that he acted unjuſtly in paſſing by all the fallen angels. But, arrogant creature, thou art ſilent on this head. Even fallen angels muſt be aſtoniſhed at thy blind partiality, and clearly perceive that thou judgeſt of equity according to the relation it bears to thy own intereſt. Or ſhall I rather ſay, that they rejoice in their ſucceſs in blinding thy mind on this ſubject; as conſtituting an eminent part of their revenge againſt the ſovereign Diſpoſer of all, for the awful diſplay of his ſovereignty at their expence? Is it thus they attempt to rob

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God of the glory, and man of the bleſſed fruits, of that attribute from which they derive no benefit themſelves? And is this all thy return of gratitude to God, for the ineffable advantage that accrues to thy fallen nature from the exerciſe of this adorable perfection? Doſt thou "thus re-"quite the LORD, O fooliſh and unwiſe?"

I ſhall only further add on this article, that the ſovereignty of God eminently appears in exalting fallen man to *greater honour* than that enjoyed by angels who never fell. I ſpeak not of the honour to which our nature is advanced in the perſon of the Mediator. How great is that of the younger brethren! They are redeemed by the blood of Him who is God. They are made to ſit with him upon his throne. The higheſt dignity to which holy angels are admitted, is that of being ſervants to Chriſt as Mediator. Nay, "are "they not all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to mi-"niſter to them who are the heirs of ſalvation?" Did they imitate the language of preſumptuous man, they would ſay; "It were honour enough "for fallen worms, to miniſter to pure ſpirits who "never ſinned. Inſtead of this, however, by an "abſolute determination, we are required to mi-"niſter to them. We muſt watch over their bo-"dies, and waft their ſouls to heaven. They ſit "on their ſeats [d], and our higheſt honour is to "ſtand before God [e], or to fly through the uni-"verſe in his ſervice [f]." But were it poſſible, they could utter ſuch language, they would inſtantly

[d] Rev. iv. 4.; xi. 16. [e] Luke i. 19. [f] Dan. ix. 21.

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ſtantly be hurled into hell. Theſe intelligent ſpirits muſt be fully perſuaded that the diſtinction reſults from the ſovereignty of their Creator; and even this ſovereignty they adore. In this conſiſts the perfection of theſe "miniſters of his," that they "do his pleaſure [g]." And this very perfection are we taught to pray for, as the higheſt honour of our nature. Our Lord therefore taught his diſciples to ſay; "Thy will be done on earth, "as it is in heaven [h]."

8. God manifeſted his ſovereignty, in chooſing *Iſrael* as a peculiar people. Both in the choice itſelf, and in the circumſtances of it, may we clearly perceive the diſplay of this perfection. Let us attend to the *choice* itſelf. Is not God the common father of men? Are not all equally his offſpring? Hath he not "made of one blood all "nations to dwell on the face of the whole "earth?" Is there any nation, however remote from others, however barbarous, to which he can ſay, Ye are not the work of my hands? Yet here we find him ſelecting one nation from all the reſt, to enjoy the honours and privileges of a peculiar people. Were they to be more eſpecially under the care of his providence? Was he to favour them with a more fertile land, richer harveſts, a more abundant increaſe? Was he to give them greater ſucceſs againſt their enemies, or to make them more diſtinguiſhed for wiſdom, and proficiency in arts and ſciences? All this had been little. He choſe them to the enjoyment of the means of ſalvation, while he excluded every other nation

g Pſal. ciii. 21. h Mat. vi. 10.

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nation under heaven from this privilege. "He "shewed his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and "his judgments unto Iſrael. He hath not dealt "ſo with any nation; and as for his judgments, "they have not known them [i]."

Many, indeed, in order to draw a veil over divine ſovereignty, attempt to depreciate this mercy; as if it were to judge hardly of God, to ſuppoſe that he left all the nations, that were deſtitute of revelation, to periſh for eternity. But the Iſraelites were aſſured that this was their diſtinguiſhing mercy; that they were "a bleſſed peo-"ple who knew the joyful ſound;" that where there was "no viſion, the people would periſh;" and that God would "pour his fury on the hea-"then." It is the harmonious voice of Scripture, that thoſe who are "aliens from the com-"monwealth of Iſrael," being "ſtrangers to the "covenants of promiſe," have therefore "no "hope," and are "without God," or "atheiſts "in the world [k]."

If this were not the caſe, I ſhall venture to ſay that the Iſraelites, ſo far from being more highly favoured than other nations, were treated with far greater ſeverity. If God did not diſplay his ſovereignty in chooſing them to the enjoyment of privileges neceſſary to ſalvation, he undoubtedly diſplayed that ſame perfection, though in a very different way, in ſubjecting them to a bondage from which all other nations were free, while they were not to be any better for it. For the law

[i] Pſal. cxlvii. 19, 20. [k] Eph. ii. 12.

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law was "a yoke, which," an apoſtle ſays, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear [l]."

Whence, then, could God exerciſe ſuch a power as this? Whence is it that we have no right to impeach his juſtice? It is becauſe, being the Sovereign LORD, he may "do according "to his will among the inhabitants of this earth."

Now, what God did to the literal poſterity of Jacob, was typical of his conduct to ſpiritual Iſrael. Did he chooſe them to be externally holy [m]? This choice was figurative of the election of his people "to be holy and without blame "before him in love?" Hence, as has been formerly obſerved, the Spirit of God applies to them that very language, which is primarily uſed concerning the type: "Ye are a "choſen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar "people [n]." What was originally extended to all the deſcendants of Jacob, is here reſtricted to thoſe who are "elect according to the foreknow-"ledge of God the Father, through ſanctification "of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of "the blood of Jeſus Chriſt [o]."

If we attend to the *circumſtances* of this choice, the ſame character will appear to be equally impreſſed on it. Were they entitled to this diſtinction, from any ſuperior worth on their part? If this was the caſe, they muſt have poſſeſſed this recommendation, in reſpect of origin, dignity, wealth, extent, wiſdom or goodneſs. Were they better than other nations as to *origin?* Whatever

l Acts xv. 10. m Exod. xix. 6. n 1 Pet. ii. 9. o Chap. i. 2.

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ever they might themſelves imagine, they had no pre-eminence, according to the eſtimation of God. Thus he addreſſes them: "Thy birth, and thy "nativity is of the land of Canaan, thy father "was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite [p]." Nay, thus he commands them to addreſs him, when appearing before him with their oblations; "A "Syrian ready to periſh was my father [q]." In their ſolemn approaches, they muſt ſtill remember the meanneſs of their origin, and acknowledge that, in this reſpect, they had no ground of boaſting before God.

Could the temporal *dignity* of their ſituation, when God ſeparated them to himſelf, entitle them to this diſtinction? Were they not *aliens* in Egypt? For ſeveral centuries they were ſtrangers in a land that was not theirs [r]. Yea, they were *ſlaves*. Had God regarded national dignity, he would undoubtedly have preferred the Egyptians, who were not only their maſters, but a very ancient people, and diſtinguiſhed as a nation long before the name of Iſrael was known.

They could boaſt as little of their *riches*. They had no poſſeſſions of their own. That Syrian, their father, from whom they received their name, "ſojourned in Egypt [s]." Abraham had no higher character. Wherever he was, whether in Canaan, or in Egypt, he was ſtill a ſojourner. His only eſtate was a burial-place, as if God meant to teach him, that he ſhould have no reſt but in the grave. What riches they had, when they left Egypt,

p Ezek. xvi. 3. q Deut. xxvi. 5. r Gen. xv. 13.
s Deut. xxvi. 5.

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Egypt, were given them by God, as the reward of their paſt labours.

Did their *extent* as a people recommend them to God? So contemptible were they in this reſpect, that, had he judged after the manner of man, they would have been the laſt nation that he would have ſelected. Obſerve how Moſes addreſſes Iſrael on this head. "The LORD did not "ſet his love upon you, nor chooſe you, becauſe "ye were more in number than any people, (for "ye were the feweſt of all people)[t]." This was to be an article in their ſolemn confeſſion, already referred to: "Thou ſhalt ſpeak, and ſay be"fore the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to pe"riſh was my father, and he went down into E"gypt, and ſojourned there with a *few*[u]." God promiſed them all the good which he afterwards conferred, when they were deſpicable as to numbers. He ſaid, "Unto thee will I give the land "of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: when "they were but a few men in number: yea, very "few, and ſtrangers in it[v]."

But perhaps their ſuperior *wiſdom* procured this diſtinguiſhing honour. On the contrary, in reſpect of human wiſdom, they were greatly inferior to ſome other nations. They were far ſurpaſſed by the Egyptians. Their conduct, in a variety of inſtances, ſhews their deficiency as to divine wiſdom. Had they not been formerly enamoured with the bruiſh worſhip of Egypt, would they ever have thought of making a calf? Had they not

t Deut. vii. 7. u Ibid. v Pſal. cv. 11, 12.

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not been extremely ſtupid, would they ever have thought of it, after hearing the voice of God? Moſes accuſes them of requiting the Lord, "as a "fooliſh people and unwiſe." They receive the very ſame character from God. "They are a na- "tion void of counſel, neither is there any un- "derſtanding in them [w]." And they continued to deſerve no better character, in their ſucceeding generations: "My people is fooliſh,—they are "ſottiſh children, and they have none underſtand- "ing [x]."

If they were ſo deficient as to wiſdom in divine things, it cannot be ſuppoſed that their ſuperior goodneſs would atone for their other defects. This, indeed, is immediately added as the great evidence of their want of true wiſdom: "They are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they "have no knowledge [y]." Even the ſons of Jacob were ſtained by envy, cruelty and perfidy. They hated Joſeph, becauſe their father loved him. They firſt conſpired againſt his life, and afterwards ſold him for a ſlave. Their cruel and perfidious conduct to the Shechemites made Jacob "to ſtink among the inhabitants of the land, a- "mongſt the Canaanites, and the Perizzites [z];" the very people whom God, becauſe of their wickedneſs, was to drive out before Iſrael. We have formerly ſeen, that in Egypt they polluted themſelves with the idolatry of the inhabitants of that land. Afterwards, as if a mere conformity to their

w Deut. xxxii. 6. 28. x Jer. iv. 22. y Ibid.
z Gen. xxxiv. 27. 30.

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their idolatrous neighbours had been too little, they did worſe than all the nations round about [a], "worſe than the heathen whom the LORD had de-"ſtroyed before them [b]."

The all-wiſe God knew their character when he choſe them. None can be ſo fooliſh as to imagine that he hoped they would prove better than they did, that they would be awed by his judgments, or mollified by his mercies. He foreſaw the whole extent of their wickedneſs. Thus, he expreſsly teſtifies that he knew what they were, and what they would be. He declares that when he fixed his love on them, he diſcerned nothing that could in any reſpect or degree prove a recommendation. He illuſtrates their original ſituation by a moſt ſtriking alluſion to a child expoſed by its unnatural parent, according to a barbarous cuſtom that greatly prevailed among the heathen. Inſtead of wealth or power, he ſaw nothing but nakedneſs and weakneſs! Inſtead of wiſdom or moral beauty, all the ignorance of infancy and the groſſeſt pollution! "Thou waſt "caſt out in the open field, to the lothing of thy "perſon, in the day that thou waſt born [c]." He alſo declares his certain foreknowledge of their future conduct: "I knew that thou wouldeſt deal "very treacherouſly, and waſt called a tranſgreſſor "from the womb [d]."

Since ſuch was the character of this people, why did God chooſe them? The ſovereignty of his

a Ezek. xvi. 46, 47. b 2 Chr. xxxiii. 9. c Ezek. xvi. 5.
d Iſa. xlviii. 8.

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his own will was the only reaſon of his choice. He looked for no moving cauſe without himſelf. He took care that they ſhould be particularly informed of this. Therefore Moſes, having informed the Iſraelites, that the Lord did not ſet his love upon them, nor chooſe them becauſe of their number, ſubjoins;—"But becauſe the LORD "loved you, and becauſe he would keep the oath "which he had ſworn unto your fathers [e]." The faithfulneſs of God, although here connected with his ſovereignty, is not to be conſidered as a reaſon for his love, but for their enjoyment of the fruits of it, in being "brought out," as it follows, "with a mighty hand, and redeemed out of "the houſe of bondmen." For the operation of the faithfulneſs of God, with reſpect to them, was only the fruit of the eternal purpoſe of his love. He had "ſworn to their fathers," becauſe he had, in abſolute ſovereignty, choſen their ſeed to be his peculiar people. Moſes elſewhere aſſures them, that God ſtood in no need of them as a people: "Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens "is the LORD's thy God, the earth alſo with all "that therein is. *Only* the LORD had delight in "thy fathers to love them, and he choſe their "ſeed after them, even you above all people, as it "is this day [f]." And well might the man of God remind Iſrael of the ſovereignty of this choice, when he pleads it with God himſelf, as a more powerful argument in their behalf, than all their unworthineſs could be againſt them: "Look "not

[e] Deut. vii. 7, 8. [f] Deut. x. 14, 15.

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"not unto the ſtubbornneſs of this people, nor to "their wickedneſs, nor to their ſin.—Yet they "are thy people, and thine inheritance g."

Now, as, in the choice of literal Iſrael, God had no reſpect to any worth in the object of his love, this was a *figure* of the ſovereign manner in which he chooſes his true Iſrael. They had no merit, when he ſeparated them as his peculiar people. Thus they fitly prefigured them, who are called, "not for works of righteouſneſs which "they have done, but of his own mercy." Did he know that the future conduct of his choſen people would be equally undeſerving? In this alſo they exhibited the character of his ſpiritual ſeed. For when he fixed his love on them, he foreſaw all their wanderings and apoſtacies, their unbelief and ingratitude. But he "loved them, "becauſe he loved them." If, without any obſtacle on the part of his juſtice or goodneſs, he might ſingle out one nation to the enjoyment of ſpiritual privileges, to the excluſion of every other; who will preſume to ſay that it is inconſiſtent with any of theſe perfections, that he ſhould ſelect certain perſons to the enjoyment of all the benefit ariſing from theſe ſpiritual privileges, although others be excluded? Indeed, to ſhew us the great deſign of this part of the divine conduct, we find this national election *terminating* in a choice of individuals. When God had ſerved his ends, by the election of a particular nation, when he was about to aboliſh this diſtinction, we find

g Deut. ix. 27. 29.

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it running into an election of persons, to the exclusion of the body of that once-favoured nation. Were the carnal Jews ready to object, that the Christian religion could not be true, because in this case God must have rejected his people, and broken his promise? the apostle Paul could reply; "They are not all Israel, which are of Is-"rael: neither because they are the seed of Abra-"ham, are they all children.—They which are "the children of the flesh are not the children of "God: but the children of the promise are count-"ed for the seed." Thus he shews that it could by no means be said, that "the word of God had "taken none effect;" that his promise to the fathers had failed [h]. He shews that the promise, although it literally and primarily respected the choice of the nation, as such, to distinguishing privileges, carried in its womb, nay, ultimately and specially respected a further display of divine sovereignty, in the choice of individuals of that nation to the essence of these privileges; that, although its outward aspect seemed confined to Israel according to the flesh, it was inwardly pointed to all who should be the seed of Abraham by faith, "not of the Jews only, but also of the "Gentiles [i]." He even shews that all along, under the old dispensation, the national election to external privileges, was only a figure of a personal election to those which are inward; that the former was as it were the covering of the other, the cabinet, however precious in itself, that contained

h Rom. ix. 6.—8. i Ver. 24.

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tained the more precious jewel. He therefore applies the hiſtory of Elias, as a proof of perſonal and particular election [k]. The prophet imagined that he was "left alone" in the ſervice of JEHOVAH. "But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto "him? I have reſerved to myſelf, ſeven thouſand "men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Here we have an election of *individuals*, as diſtinguiſhed from the nation in general; an election of a *certain* number, "ſeven thouſand men;" an election to *holineſs*, for they made no compliances with idolatry; an election of *grace*, and terminating in *efficacious* power; for God claims the work as wholly his own; "I have reſerved:" and an election *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace*, as the end; "I have reſerved *to myſelf*." The apoſtle aſſerts that he taught no new doctrine; that when he affirmed a perſonal election, he affirmed no more than what was taught by God himſelf, and exemplified in the hiſtory of Iſrael, in the days of Elias: "*Even ſo* then at this pre-"ſent time *alſo*, there is a remnant, according to "the election of grace." Thus it is evident, that the national election of Iſrael, to external privileges, *typified*, *terminated in*, nay, all along *included*, an election of perſons to that ſaving grace of which theſe were only the means.

10. There never was, and there never will be, any nation ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed as ancient Iſrael. But the ſovereignty of God ſtill appears in that diſtinction which he makes among *nations*

[k] Rom. xi. 2.—5.

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with reſpect to the *means* of ſalvation. How many nations are there in the world that never heard of ſalvation? How many, that have been deprived of the goſpel during a long ſeries of ages? Who hath made us, in theſe iſles of the ſea, to differ from others, as to the external privileges of grace? Are we Britons ſo much better than the natives of Hindoſtan, that we are favoured with the goſpel, while they are buried in the darkneſs of heatheniſm? Let the hiſtory of our conduct in that diſtant country, for ſeveral ages, give an anſwer to the queſtion. Why hath God left the Chineſe, perhaps in other reſpects the wiſeſt people in the world, in groſs obſcurity, and extended his mercy to us? Did he expect that we would be more grateful and obedient to him, or more humane and loving to man, than many other nations whom he hath left in darkneſs? To ſay ſo, would be to arraign the foreknowledge of God. For there are other nations in the world, that never enjoyed the means of ſalvation, whoſe manners would extort a bluſh from the generality of profeſſed Chriſtians, did they "not refuſe to "be aſhamed." We muſt either deny divine preſcience altogether, or admit that God foreknew all this; foreknew that the greateſt part of thoſe called Chriſtians, would "cauſe even *his* "name to ſtink among the inhabitants" of heathen countries; that their ungodly conduct would prove the greateſt obſtacle to the propagation of Chriſtianity. Why then did he favour ſuch nations with the goſpel, and deny it to others? We muſt

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muſt undoubtedly reſolve it into the ſovereignty of his own will. This choice of nations to external privileges, is as really an act of ſovereignty, as the choice of individuals to eternal life; unleſs it can be proved that the enjoyment of the means is not neceſſary to the attainment of the end. Let thoſe who think ſo anſwer theſe queſtions; "How ſhall they believe in him of whom they "have not heard? And how ſhall they hear "without a preacher[1]?" But if it be neceſſary to hear of Chriſt before men can believe in him, and if "there is not another name under heaven, gi-"ven among men by which we muſt be ſaved;" ſurely, God diſplays the ſovereignty of his will, in giving this revelation to ſome, and withholding it from others. This diſplay may not at firſt ſtrike the eye ſo much as that with reſpect to the end. But it is for want of attention. For if men cannot be ſaved without the goſpel of the grace of God, (and there is not one word in the Bible that gives us reaſon to ſuppoſe the contrary), he acts no leſs ſovereignly in refuſing men the means, than in withholding the end; becauſe the end cannot be attained without the means.

[1] Rom. x. 14.

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SECTION VIII.

On Divine Sovereignty in the Diviſion of Canaan;—the Treatment of the Tribes of Iſrael;—the Choice of a Place of Worſhip;—the Employment of Means and Inſtruments of Judgment or Mercy;—the Diſtribution of Gifts;—the Management of our Lot;—the Afflictions of the Children of God;—with reſpect to earthly Kingdoms;—in relation to the Church.—Severe Judgments inflicted for the Denial of this Perfection.

11. THE ſovereignty of God is illuſtrated by the manner in which he *divided* the *land* of Canaan among the tribes of Iſrael. This was by lot, as it was declared by Moſes[m]: "The land "ſhall be divided by lot; according to the names "of the tribes of their fathers they ſhall inherit. "According to the lot ſhall the poſſeſſions thereof "be divided, between many and few." While by this ordination God taught his people their dependance upon his ſovereign pleaſure for all temporal mercies, it had a further and a ſpecial reference to thoſe which "pertain to life and godli-"neſs." No tribe, no family could ſay, "We "have obtained from Joſhua a better inheritance "than ſuch another tribe or family, becauſe we "had

m Num. xxvi. 55, 56.

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"had a ſuperior claim by our ſervices." For "the lot was caſt into the lap, and the whole diſ-"poſal thereof was of the LORD." No one could ſay, "I ſhall dwell here, becauſe it is my choice." For the choice was wholly God's. In this was prefigured the choice of the ſpiritual Iſrael; which is "not of him that willeth, nor of him "that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy." This very language is applied to the ſeed of the antitypical Jacob. Thus in the forty-ſeventh Pſalm, which contains a celebration of the aſcenſion of our Lord, of the true Joſhua's entering into his reſt, and of the bleſſed fruits of it in the ſubjection of the nations to the faith, the Church adopts this language, as aſcribing all ſpiritual bleſſings to "the good pleaſure of his will;" "He ſhall chooſe our inheritance for us; the ex-"cellency of Jacob whom he loved [n]." Nay, that Elect in whom the ſoul of the Father delighteth, employs the ſame language concerning himſelf, in his public character. "Thou main-"taineſt my lot [o]." He acknowledges that his deſignation to the work of redemption, and the conſequent reward, were primarily to be aſcribed to the ſovereign choice of the Father, who "hath "choſen us in him [p]."

The ſame language runs through the whole of the New Teſtament. Hath God choſen his people to a glorious inheritance? It was not for their foreſeen faith, good works, or perſeverance. It is as much of ſovereignty as the appointment

n Ver. 5. o Pſal. xvi. 5. p Eph. i. 4.

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of the tribes of Iſrael to particular inheritances. The Gentiles are, therefore, ſaid to "receive an "inheritance," literally, "a *lot* among them who "are ſanctified [o]." We are "made meet to be "partakers of the *lot* of the ſaints in light [p]." Here creature-merit is excluded on every ſide. For the inheritance is not only called a lot, but we are ſaid to be "made meet for" it, which plainly ſhews, that we are naturally unmeet, and cannot qualify ourſelves by any thing that we can do. Not only is the inheritance ſaid to be given to the people of God by lot: but the expreſſion is reverſed. They are ſaid to be choſen to it, in the ſame manner. For in Chriſt "we "have obtained an inheritance," or, "we have "been deſigned by lot:" and no wonder ſuch language is uſed, as it follows,—"being predeſ-"tinated *according to the purpoſe* of him who "worketh *all* things after the counſel of *his own* "*will* [q]." The latter language ſhows the reaſon why the former is uſed. It is ſaid, that we are deſigned by *lot*; becauſe our enjoyment of the inheritance depends wholly on the ſovereign pleaſure of God. This mode of expreſſion does not denote any thing accidental or contingent with reſpect to him; but that he pays as little regard to merit in the objects of his choice, as if they were choſen by lot; as little, as a creature would do, who ſhould decide with reſpect to an earthly inheritance in this way. We receive the inheritance willingly. But it is God who "worketh in us to "will."

o Acts xxvi. 18. p Col. i. 12. q Eph. i. 11.

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"will." We are eventually qualified for it. But this is only as he "worketh in us to do."

12. As God manifeſted his ſovereignty, in the inſtance already mentioned, with reſpect to the tribes of Iſrael in general, he did ſo, in other inſtances, as to particular *tribes*, *families* and *perſons*. It is generally admitted, that before the giving of the law, the firſt-born of the different families of Iſrael had acted as prieſts. It appears, that for a time God ſanctioned this practice, by hallowing the firſt-born [r]. Now, Levi was not the firſt-born. Yet his poſterity were ſeparated to God for the work of the prieſthood. Was it becauſe of any ſuperior worth in their progenitor? Surely no. For Levi was brother to Simeon in cruelty. His children could not be better qualified than their brethren for the ſervice of the altar, becauſe their father had made a ſacrifice of the Shechemites. This deſignation is wholly referred to the pleaſure of God. "The "LORD ſeparated the tribe of Levi, to bear the "ark of the covenant of the LORD, to ſtand before "the LORD, to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in "his name [s]." "The prieſts, the ſons of Levi "ſhall come near; for them the LORD thy God "hath choſen to miniſter unto him [t]."

Neither was Judah the firſt-born. But God conferred the ſceptre on the tribe which bore his name. He "choſe not the tribe of Ephraim: "but choſe the tribe of Judah [u]." To it alſo he gave

r Numb. iii. 13. s Deut. x. 8. t Deut. xxi. 5.
u Pſal. lxxviii. 67, 68.

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gave the exclusive promise of the descent of the Messiah. In this tribe, the regal power was confined to the family of Jesse, although it was not distinguished for wealth or greatness. Thence some spake contemptibly of David: "Who is "David? or who is the son of Jesse[v]?" From this consideration David himself extols divine sovereignty: "What am I, and what is my father's "house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" Bethlehem was but a mean village. Yet here must the Messiah be born: "And thou Bethlehem-"Ephratah, although thou be little among the "thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he "come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Is-"rael[w]." The family of Joseph seems to have been one of the meanest in the house of David, or belonging to Bethlehem. For Joseph and Mary could find no lodging but in a stable. Yet from this family must the Messiah spring.

13. God signalized his sovereignty in the *choice* of that particular *place* where he would be worshipped. All places are alike to Him, to whom "the earth belongs, and the fulness thereof;" who "filleth heaven and earth;" whom "hea-"ven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain." But, under the law, he inculcated the doctrine of his sovereignty on the church, by not only regulating the whole manner of worship, but by limiting the place. That she might have still more reason for learning unreserved submission to his will, she was long kept in suspense. All that she was

[v] 1 Sam. xxv. 10. [w] Micah v. 2.

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was permitted to know, was the certainty of God's chooſing ſuch a place. But where it might be, or when he might be pleaſed to declare his will in this reſpect, ſhe was abſolutely ignorant. "There "ſhall be a place which the LORD your God ſhall "chooſe, to cauſe his name to dwell there, thi-"ther ſhall ye bring all that I command you [x]." He dealt with the ſeed of Abraham as he had done with their father, with reſpect to that very place where he was afterwards to put his name. He commanded him to go and offer up his ſon on one of the mountains which he ſhould tell him of [y]. Here, indeed, was the true Iſaac ſacrificed. This place, although in itſelf no better, was preferred to every other in the tribe of Judah, nay, in the land of Canaan: "Unto the place which "the LORD your God ſhall chooſe, *out of all your* "*tribes*, to put his name there,—thither thou "ſhalt come [z]." If their ritual worſhip, though conformable to the divine inſtitution in every other reſpect, wanted this ſingle requiſite of being offered at this place, they were aſſured that it would be totally unacceptable [a]. When the LORD diſtinguiſhed the tribe of Judah, by putting his name in Jeruſalem, it was in the way of rejecting every place in the tribe of Ephraim, within the boundaries of which his tabernacle had ſtood for many ages. "He refuſed the tabernacle of Jo-"ſeph, and choſe not the tribe of Ephraim: but "choſe the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which "he

x Deut. xii. 11.
z Deut. xii. 5.
y Gen. xxii. 2.; 2 Chron. iii. 1.
a Deut. xii. 11, 13, 14.

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"he loved [b]." Why did he prefer Judah to Ephraim, Jeruſalem to Shiloh? In Shiloh, indeed, his ordinances had been profaned. But he knew that this would ſoon be the caſe in Jeruſalem alſo. We can give no reaſon for the preference, but that which God himſelf gives. This was his own pleaſure. "The LORD hath choſen Zion; he hath "deſired it for his habitation. This is my reſt "for ever: here will I dwell, *for I have deſired* "*it* [c]."

14. The ſame ſovereignty appears in the *means* or *inſtruments* which God employs for accompliſhing his purpoſes either of *judgment* or of *mercy*.

It would naturally occur to us, that when God meant to puniſh a people for their wickedneſs, he would employ inſtruments prepared for the work by a love of righteouſneſs; that the innocent ſhould wield the weapons of his vengeance againſt the guilty, the ſincere againſt the hypocritical, the humble againſt the haughty, and the merciful againſt thoſe "who breathe out cruelty." But "his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our "thoughts." He often takes a plan directly the reverſe of that which would be ſuppoſed, or approved, by us. He employs the worſt of men for the beſt of purpoſes. He takes inſtruments out of the devil's hand for performing his own work. He lets looſe hell, that it may fight the battles of heaven. Short-ſighted creatures are in danger of denying the work to be his, becauſe they do not immediately diſcern his hand; becauſe they diſcern no

[b] Pſal. lxviii. 68, 69. [c] Pſal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

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no hand ſave that of his enemies. But they conſider not, that while the work is as really his own, as if inſtruments more apparently ſuited to it were employed, there is a more ſtriking diſplay of his wiſdom and power, in making the very wrath of man to praiſe him, and in reſtraining the remainder of it. They have not learned, from the Sacred Hiſtory, that this is the moſt ordinary method of the divine procedure. When God had a work of judgment to execute on the devoted family of the wicked Ahab [d], he employed an inſtrument little better than himſelf [e], and in one reſpect worſe [f]. Jehu, not only an idolater, but a vile hypocrite, is the man ſingled out from all the tribes of Iſrael for accompliſhing God's work of vengeance on the houſe of Ahab.

In this very way hath God often puniſhed his Church. Was not Sennacherib, an ambitious and blood-thirſty tyrant, the perſon ſelected as the inſtrument by whom JEHOVAH was "to perform "his whole work on Mount Zion, and on Jeruſa-"lem [g]?" Here, we find a heathen employed againſt hypocritical profeſſors; a blaſphemer of the true God uſed as "the rod of his anger." He, who dared to call the God of Jeruſalem an idol, receives a commiſſion from him to puniſh his own people [h]. Does he not deſign the vainglorious Nebuchadnezzar his ſervant, even when ſeeking the deſtruction of Judah? Hear, how he ſpeaks by his prophet: "Behold, I will ſend and "take

d 2 Kings ix. 7. e 2 Kings x. 31. f Ver. 16.
g Iſa. x. 12. h Ver. 5.—11.

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"take all the families of the north, saith the "LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Baby- "lon my servant, and will bring them against "this land, and against the inhabitants thereof,— "and will utterly destroy them, and make them "an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual "desolations [i]."

In the same sovereign way, does he fulfil his purposes of *mercy*. Sometimes, he employs *good* men in the work. He had a branch of his Church even in Sodom. For the deliverance of righteous Lot, Abraham obtains victory over four kings [k]. "Who raised up the righteous man from the "east, called him to his foot, gave the nations be- "fore him, and made him rule over kings? He "gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven "stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and pas- "sed safely, even by the way that he had not "gone with his feet [l]." At other times he employs *wicked* men. He had made heathens the instruments of punishing his people, and heathens are employed as the instruments of their deliverance. Cyrus knew as little of the true God as Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar. But God raises him up, and gives him all his power and success for this very end, that he might liberate his Church. He had called the king of Babylon his *servant*. But he calls the conqueror of Babylon his *anointed* [m]. He gives him a more honourable epithet, because he called him to more honourable work, to work typical

i Jer. xxv. 9. k Gen. xiv. 15. l Isa. xli. 2, 3.
m Isa. xlv. 1.—5.

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typical of that which was to be performed by his true Anointed. He extends this honour to the very army that Cyrus commanded. They were to be the inſtruments of accompliſhing his purpoſes with reſpect to Babylon. Therefore, although an aſſemblage of heathens, he deſcribes them as ſanctified, or ſet apart to this work, by himſelf. Although they knew not that God who ſtrengthened them, he calls them his "mighty "ones." He ſpeaks of them as "rejoicing in "his highneſs," or "glory," becauſe they rejoiced in that work which was to terminate in his glory, although they were ignorant of this [n].

Notwithſtanding the honourable epithets thus beſtowed on Cyrus and his army, with reſpect to their work; a very different picture is given of both, when their own character and deſigns are taken into conſideration. They are exhibited as "a cruel people, that will not ſhew mercy," as "having no pity on the fruit of the womb, and "whoſe eye ſhould not ſpare children [o]." Cyrus himſelf gets no better character than that of a bird of prey. While JEHOVAH appeals to the immutability and abſolute ſovereignty of his purpoſe, as an incontrovertible evidence of his being the only true God; he at the ſame proclaims his almighty power in the manner of accompliſhing it. "I am God, and there is none elſe,—decla-"ring the end from the beginning, and from an-"cient times the things that are not yet done, "ſaying, My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all "my

[n] Iſa. xiii. 3—5. [o] Ver. 18.; Jer. l. 42.

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" my pleaſure: calling a ravenous bird from the " eaſt, the man that executeth my counſel from a " far country: yea, I have ſpoken it, I will alſo " bring it to paſs; I have purpoſed it, I will alſo " do it [p]." Behold the ſovereignty of God! He who " called the righteous man from the eaſt," is the ſame who " called a ravenous bird from " the eaſt:" and both for the ſame work of liberating his captives. Both are under his direction, and in the calling of both he diſplays equal righteouſneſs. For he ſaith of Cyrus, " I have " raiſed him up in righteouſneſs [q]."

Did the Lord deſtroy literal Babylon by means of " a ravenous bird?" Did he do it in righteouſneſs? Need we wonder, then, though he ſhould obſerve the ſame courſe, in accompliſhing the deſtruction of myſtical Babylon, of which the other was only a type? though he " cry to all the " *fowls* that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and " gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of " the great God [r]?" Although, in the deſtruction of Babylon, God ſhould employ men as irreligious as the heathen, or more ſo, as mercileſs as the Medes; we muſt not therefore either deny, or be prejudiced againſt his work. The wickedneſs of the inſtruments is wholly their own. Whatever God does by them, he does it " in righteouſ- " neſs,"—Yet mark his language; " I will ſtir " up the Medes againſt them:—their bows alſo " ſhall daſh the young men to pieces, and they " ſhall have no pity [s]." " The LORD hath raiſed " up

[p] Iſa. xlvi. 9.—11. [q] Iſa. xlv. 13. [r] Rev. xix. 17. [s] Iſa. xiii. 17.

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"up the ſpirit of the kings of the Medes: for "his deſire is againſt Babylon, to deſtroy it: be- "cauſe it is the vengeance of the LORD, the ven- "geance of his temple [t]."

God often gives a ſtriking diſplay of his ſove- reignty in puniſhing ſin by ſin. He does ſo in various ways. He makes one ſin its own puniſh- ment. He puniſhes one ſin by another commit- ted by the ſame perſon. Or, he puniſhes the ſin of one perſon, by means of a ſin committed by another. As virtue is its own reward, in as far as "the ways of wiſdom are ways of plea- "ſantneſs, and all her paths peace;" ſin often proves its own puniſhment, in that miſery which it brings along with it, as inſeparable from its nature. Ahab's covetouſneſs, in deſiring the vine- yard of Naboth, was undoubtedly his ſin. But it was as certainly his puniſhment. For he "was "heavy and diſpleaſed,—and laid him down up- "on his bed, and turned away his face, and would "eat no bread [u]." The pride of Haman was al- ſo its own puniſhment. For notwithſtanding his great honours, he ſays; "All this availeth me no- "thing, as long as I ſee Mordecai the Jew ſitting "at the king's gate [v]."

Sometimes, he puniſhes a former ſin by one that ſucceeds it. The ſin of Judas, in betraying his Maſter, was puniſhed by his being left to be- come his own murderer. The Gentiles provoked God by their idolatry, in "changing the glory of "the uncorruptible God into an image made like

t Jer. li. 11. u 1 Kings xxi. 1.—4. Eſth. v. 13.

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" unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-
" footed beaſts, and creeping things." Now, mark their puniſhment. " *Wherefore* God alſo gave
" them up to uncleanneſs." And again; " Even
" as they did not like to retain God in their
" knowledge," or, " in acknowledgment, God
" gave them over to a reprobate mind [w]."

He alſo puniſhes the ſin of one perſon by that of another. The ſin of David in the matter of Uriah and Bathſheba, was puniſhed by the inceſt of Abſalom. Therefore the Lord ſent this meſſage to David: " Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold,
" I will raiſe up evil againſt thee out of thine own
" houſe, and I will take thy wives before thine
" eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and
" he ſhall lie with thy wives in the ſight of this
" ſun. For thou didſt it ſecretly: but I will do
" this thing before all Iſrael, and before the
" ſun [x]."

In a word, the God of infinite holineſs often uſes Satan himſelf as his inſtrument. Thus we read, that, when he was plaguing the Egyptians, he " ſent evil angels among them [y]." He permitted him to act as a lying ſpirit in the mouth of the falſe prophets of Ahab, when he was about to accompliſh the deſtruction of this wicked prince. He even employs him as an inſtrument for chaſtening his own people. Job was in part ſubjected to his power. We read of a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had long bound. And the general experience of the Church concurs with the

w Rom. i. 23, 24. 28. x 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. y Pſal. lxxviii. 49.

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the teſtimony of inſpiration, in aſſuring us, that when a loving father means to humble and prove his own children, he often ſubjects them to ſevere diſcipline, by means of the temptations of this cruel one.

From theſe reflections we may learn, that we ought never to judge of a work merely from the means or inſtruments employed. Did we follow this rule, we would be at times in danger of miſtaking God's work for the devil's, and the devil's for God's. Often God is doing his own work, when the carnal eye can perceive nothing but the ſad working of human corruptions. And often the devil is doing his, when " transformed into " an angel of light," and coming with ſuch " de- " ceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs," that " even " the children of God may be in part deceived." It is not to the outward aſpect of Providence that we are to look for direction; but " to the law, " and to the teſtimony." Let us alſo beware of undervaluing his work, becauſe of the inſtruments. This is an homage that he claims to his ſovereignty, that we ſhould not preſume to limit him. For " as the heavens are above the earth, " ſo are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts " above our thoughts."

15. The ſame ſovereignty appears in the diſtribution of *natural gifts*. One " rejoiceth in " his ſtrength." The life of another is a conſtant ſtruggle with conſtitutional imbecility. One is diſtinguiſhed for the gift of prudence; while indiſcretion is the characteriſtic of another. Rea-

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ſon, in one, ſeems to vie with the intellect of angels; in another, it ſcarcely equals animal inſtinct. Whence proceeds this aſtoniſhing difference? We muſt not deny the operation of ſecondary cauſes. But it muſt be ultimately reſolved into the ſovereign will of that Lord who "gi-"veth to one five talents, to another two, and to "another one [a]."

16. The ſame thing appears from the whole management of our *lot*. Our very uſe of this word, with reſpect to human concerns, contains a virtual acknowledgment of divine ſovereignty. Some, indeed, prefer other terms, which as they are more allied to the language of heathens, are too often uſed to convey ſimilar ſentiments. They talk of their *luck*, or their *fortune*. But the former is that which is conſecrated by the Spirit of God. Thus did David the Type, nay, the glorious Antitype, expreſs himſelf; "Thou maintaineſt my "lot [b]." Nor did either of theſe diſtinguiſhed perſons confine this language to the great and leading circumſtances of life. For it is added, without any limitation; "The *lines* are fallen "unto me in pleaſant places [c]."

Nothing may ſeem more to depend on chance, or on the moſt trivial cauſes, than the place of our reſidence on this earth. Yet we are aſſured that God "hath determined the bounds of our "habitation [c]." It is wholly the reſult of his ſovereign will, that one is placed "in the valley "of viſion;" and that another "ſits in dark-"neſs, and in the region and ſhadow of death."

Scarcely

a Matth. xxv. 15. a Pſal. xvi. 5. b Ver. 6. c Acts xvii. 26.

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Scarcely in any reſpect does the exerciſe of this perfection more remarkably appear, than in the diſtribution of the enjoyments of this life. We ſee one born a beggar, and another a prince; or one, who is born a beggar, advanced "to ſit with "princes." On the other hand, one who has had the moſt honourable nativity, is ſometimes brought down to the loweſt ſtation in ſociety. It is undeniable, that much depends on ſecond cauſes. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," while "the ſoul of the ſluggard deſireth, and hath "nothing." But do we not often obſerve, that thoſe who have equal advantages, and equal induſtry, have very unequal ſucceſs? Perhaps, you may have marked one, whoſe circumſtances were originally the ſame with thoſe of another, who was not inferior in capacity, in diligence, or in frugality, who was employed in the very ſame line. Yet with the one every thing has been unproſperous, while riches have flowed on the other. Nay, do we not ſometimes ſee a perſon who poſſeſſes far leſs underſtanding, and diſcovers far leſs induſtry than another, proſper in all that he undertakes, while every attempt fails with the other? In common language, men confeſs their inability to account for the difference. They call the latter an *unfortunate* man. But we muſt trace matters to another ſource, to the overruling providence of that God who manages all the concerns of men as he pleaſes. We muſt remember that he not only gives the means of becoming rich, but that it depends upon his pleaſure to give ſucceſs to theſe means; that while "the rich and

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" poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of " them all [d]." The Iſraelites, therefore, are warned that it would be viewed as an evidence of their " heart forgetting the LORD their God," if they ſaid, " My power, and the might of my hand " hath gotten me this wealth." They are commanded, on the contrary, to " remember that the " LORD their God gave them power to get " wealth [e]." Let us liſten to the eſtimate of the wiſe man. " I ſaw under the ſun, that the race " is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, " neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to " men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of " ſkill, but time and chance happeneth to them " all [f]." Does he here aſcribe to mere accident what he denies to ſecond cauſes? No, ſurely: He only calls our attention to what appears as chance to unthinking man, but muſt indeed be aſcribed to the inviſible yet certain influence of the Firſt Cauſe.

The divine pleaſure regulates our lot as to the duration of life. Each of us may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, " My times are in thy hand [g]." For God " hath determined not only the bounds of our " habitation," but " the times before appointed [h]." One opens his eyes on the light of life, only that he may cloſe them in death; another is cut off in childhood; a third, amidſt all the gaieties of youth. Some are ſtruck down in the prime of life; while others are ſpared, till " the graſshopper is a bur- " den."

How

d Prov. xxii. 2. e Deut. viii. 14. 17, 18. f Eccleſ. ix. 11.
g Pſal. xxxi. 15. h Acts xvii. 26.

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How much does this ſovereignty appear in the manner in which life is terminated! "One dieth "in his full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and "quiet: His breaſts are full of milk, and his "bones are moiſtened with marrow: and another "dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never "eateth with pleaſure."[h]

17. We cannot conſider the *afflictions* of the people of God, without admiring his ſovereignty. This character appears written on his conduct, whether we compare the ſituation of one Chriſtian with that of another, or the ſufferings of the righteous in general with thoſe of the wicked. Do we compare the ſituation of one of the children of God with that of another; we perceive great reaſon humbly to adore his ſovereignty. One has a great ſhare of proſperity. He enjoys the bleſſing of health. His family increaſes. He is favoured, not with abundance only, but with affluence. His "barns are filled with "plenty, and his preſſes burſt with new wine." Another long outlives the reſt of his family, only to languiſh under diſeaſe, and to ſtruggle with the moſt abject poverty. He is ſingled out as an example of what almighty power can accompliſh, in ſupporting under the ſevereſt preſſure of affliction. At his expence, the Supreme Diſpoſer teaches other Chriſtians, what he has a right to do with them, if he pleaſes.

If we compare the ſituation of the wicked with that of the righteous, we muſt often obſerve, that the former enjoy a far greater ſhare of proſperity

h Job xxj. 23.—25.

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than the latter. It is impoſſible, at any rate, to judge of a man's ſtate for eternity from his external circumſtances. For "the righteous, and the "wiſe, and their works, are in the hand of God: "no man knoweth love or hatred, by all that is "before them. All things come alike to all, there "is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, "to the good, and to the clean, and to the un-"clean [k]." While this ordination is an argument for a future ſtate of retribution, it at the ſame time bears a ſtriking impreſs of divine ſovereignty.

18. If we attend to the diſpenſations of his providence with reſpect to the *kingdoms* of *this world*, we perceive the ſame character, only on a larger ſcale. Nations are diſpoſed of in the ſame manner as individuals. God raiſes up a nation from ſmall beginnings, gives it power and extent of dominion, brings it to the zenith of its glory, and at length hurls it into deſtruction. His ſovereign pleaſure is that awful die by which the fate of empires is determined. It is he who "ſpeaks "concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, "to build and to plant it." To him it equally belongs to "ſpeak concerning a nation, and con-"cerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull "down, and to deſtroy it [l]." What the heathen fabled concerning their Neptune, is true of our God. He "ſitteth upon the flood," whether natural or political. "The LORD ſitteth King for "ever." Indeed, we may ſtill perceive the operation of ſecond cauſes, in one ſhape or another. Wiſdom and valour are means of aggrandizement. Luxury,

k Eccleſ. ix. 1, 2. l Jer xviii. 7. 9.

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Luxury, pride, and the counſels of folly, conſpire to accompliſh the fall of a nation. But theſe ſecondary cauſes are pre-ordained, managed, and overruled by God, for the fulfilment of his own purpoſes. So ſtrongly was Babylon fortified, that it does not appear that Cyrus could have taken it in the ordinary way of attack. But the watchmen neglected to ſhut the gates on that night in which Belſhazzar made his feaſt; when, as would ſeem, diſſipation had diffuſed its influence over the whole city. This ſecondary cauſe, however, the negligence of the watchmen, was immediately under the direction of God. For, ſeveral hundred years before, he had ſaid; "The gates ſhall "not be ſhut [m]." Nebuchadnezzar was one of thoſe arrogant worms who vie with God for the honour of ſovereignty.—He flattered himſelf, in conſequence of his extenſive conqueſts, that it was *his* prerogative to diſpoſe of kingdoms, and of nations. But God, to teach this haughty monarch that the work was wholly his own, levels him with the brute creation; and as he declares the awful event before it takes place, he at the ſame time informs Nebuchadnezzar, that it was the deſign of this judgment, that he might "know that "the Moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, "and giveth it to whomſoever he will [n]."

19. As ſovereignty is the attribute of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he diſplays it in the management of his *ſpiritual kingdom*. He ſelected three diſciples from the reſt to be witneſſes of his glorious transfiguration [o]. The ſame diſciples alſo had the diſtinguiſhing

m Iſa. xlv. 1. n Dan. iv. 30.—32. o Mat. xvii. 1.

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tinguiſhing honour of witneſſing his great humiliation [p]. The reſt had no right to ſay to him, Wherefore is this diſtinction? They could not accuſe him of partiality. For he may diſpenſe his favours to whomſoever he will.—He wrought miracles, as the fruit of his ſovereign pleaſure. When the leper came to him, ſaying, "Lord, if "thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean;" he acknowledged the juſtneſs of the aſcription, and in confirmation of it accompliſhed his cure. He replied, "I will; be thou clean [q]." Now, as all the miracles which Chriſt wrought on the bodies of men, are ſigns of the miracles of grace which he works on their ſouls; the analogy is loſt, if he is not equally ſovereign in the latter. Is the removal of the bodily leproſy a ſymbol of the cure of the more fatal leproſy of ſin? And can the latter be the fruit of the ſinner's will, while the former depends on the will of God?

Chriſt ſovereignly diſpenſes *gifts* to his Church, whether ordinary or extraordinary. "He gave "ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, "evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers [r]." A paſtor had no right to complain that he was not an evangeliſt; nor an evangeliſt, that he was not endowed with the gifts of a prophet; nor a prophet, that he had not an apoſtolic miſſion. For ſaith the apoſtle; "Unto every one of us is given "grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of "Chriſt [s];" that is, juſt as he is pleaſed to give.

Elſewhere,

p Mat. xxvi. 36, 37. q Chap. viii. 2, 3. r Eph. iv. 11.
s Ver. 7.

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Elſewhere, this is attributed to the ſovereign diſpenſation of the Spirit of Chriſt. "To one is gi-"ven by the Spirit, the word of wiſdom; to ano-"ther the word of knowledge by the ſame Spi-"rit; to another the working of miracles; to "another prophecy; to another diſcerning of "ſpirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to "another the interpretation of tongues. But all "theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spi-"rit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will. "—Now hath God ſet the members, every one "of them in the body, as it pleaſed him.—And "God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt apoſtles, "ſecondarily prophets[t]," &c.

The Head of the Church diſplays the ſame ſovereignty in regard to that meaſure of *ſucceſs* which he gives his ſervants in his work. It has been often ſeen, that the moſt able and laborious have had reaſon to complain that they "have la-"boured in vain;" while thoſe, who have not equalled them in either of theſe reſpects, have been far more ſucceſsful. A ſchiſmatical ſpirit early diſcovered itſelf in the Church. One preferred Paul to Apollos; another, Apollos to Paul; and a third, Cephas to both. Their pretence for ſuch a preference, was the benefit they had received by the miniſtry of one or other of theſe. But the apoſtle ſhows the folly of ſuch conduct, from a conſideration of the ſovereignty of God, as the only reaſon of the ſucceſs of his ſervants. "Who "is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by "whom

[t] 1 Cor. xii. 8.—11. 18. 28.

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"whom ye believed, even as the Lord *gave* to "every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; "but God *gave* the increaſe. So then, neither is "he that planteth any thing, neither he that wa- "tereth; but God that *giveth* the increaſe [u]."

20. God often diſplays his juſtice in giving up men to *obduracy* of heart. But this is alſo repreſented as the effect of his ſovereignty. While he "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, "whom he will he hardeneth [v]." I do not immediately ſpeak of that hardening which reſpects the eternal ſtate, but of that only which has a reference to temporal calamities. This, as we have formerly ſeen, is the ultimate reaſon given for the conduct of the Canaanites, in not making peace with Iſrael. With reſpect to the two ſons of Eli, we are informed that "they hearkened not unto "the voice of their father, becauſe the LORD "would ſlay them [w]." When the Iſraelites applied to Rehoboam for a redreſs of grievances, he refuſed it; and the matter is thus accounted for, in the language of inſpiration; "Wherefore the "king hearkened not unto the people; for the "cauſe was from the LORD, that he might per- "form his ſaying, which he ſpake by Ahijah the "Shilonite unto Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat [x]." In our meditations on the divine influence on the hearts of men, we muſt ſtill remember that the moral evil of their actions proceeds ſolely from themſelves. But it is evident that the paſſages quoted,

[u] 1 Cor. iii. 5.—7. [v] Rom. ix. 18. [w] 1 Sam. ii. 25.
[x] 1 Kings xii. 15.

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quoted, if they have any meaning at all, expreſs ſuch an operation, on the part of God, as renders the event abſolutely certain. Although the manner of this operation, in its whole compaſs, be inconceivable to us, we cannot deny the truth of it, without denying that divine revelation is to be underſtood according to the ordinary ſenſe of language.

It may be obſerved, laſtly, that ſome of the moſt ſevere *judgments* that have ever been inflicted on men, have been expreſsly inflicted for their *denial* of divine ſovereignty. This, as we have ſeen, was the cauſe of the unexampled puniſhment of Nebuchadnezzar. But he is by no means a ſingular inſtance. What was it that ſo greatly provoked the LORD in the conduct of Korah, Dathan and Abiram? Wherefore did he "make a new thing," by cauſing "the earth to "open her mouth, and ſwallow them up," that they ſhould "go down quick into the pit[y]?" Was it becauſe they merely found fault with Moſes and Aaron? No. It was becauſe they dared to diſpute the divine ſovereignty, in *chooſing* theſe perſons to the offices aſſigned them. They ſaid to Moſes and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon "you, ſeeing all the congregation are holy every "one of them." What did Moſes reply? To-"morrow the LORD will ſhew who are his, and "who is holy; and will cauſe him to come "near unto him: even *him whom he hath choſen* "will he cauſe to come near unto him[z]." The LORD

[y] Numb. xvi. 30. [z] Ver. 3. 5.

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LORD knew that the murmurings of these rebels, although immediately directed against Moses and Aaron, were ultimately levelled against his own sovereign ordination. Therefore he says; "It "shall come to pass, that the man's rod whom I "shall choose shall blossom: and I will make to "cease *from me* the murmurings of the children "of Israel, whereby they murmur *against you* [a]." Sennacherib was only the ax, the saw, the rod and the staff in God's hand. This instrument, however, presumed to deny the Supreme Agent. The king of Assyria claimed the work as his own. He said, "By the strength of my hand I have "done it, and by my wisdom: for I am prudent." But observe how his conduct is described by JEHOVAH, and how he determines to punish it. "Shall the ax boast itself against him that hew-"eth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself "against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should "shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if "the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no "wood. Therefore shall the LORD, the LORD of "hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and un-"der his glory he shall kindle a burning like the "burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall "be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and "it shall burn and devour his thorns and his "briers in one day [b]." He trusted in the strength of his army, and this prophecy refers to its sudden and miraculous destruction [c]. But this was not all his punishment. It is farther expressed in this

a Numb. xvii. 5. b Isa. x. 15.—17. c Isa. xxxvii. 36.

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this emphatic language; "Becauſe thy rage againſt "me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, "therefore will I put my hook in thy noſe, and "my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back "by the way that thou cameſt[d]." Formerly he was repreſented as a mean inſtrument in the hand of the Almighty. Now, becauſe of his refractorineſs, he appears as a wild beaſt, bridled and muzzled by his owner, and driven whitherſoever he will.

In a word, the puniſhment of thoſe who have enjoyed the goſpel, ſeems, in a peculiar manner, to turn on this hinge. The enemies of the King are thoſe "who would not that he ſhould reign "over them[e]." All, indeed, who refuſe to obey the law, or to ſubmit to the goſpel, in whatever way, are the enemies of Chriſt. But thoſe eſpecially deſerve this character, who deny the ſovereignty of his will. For the right of diſpenſing his gifts to whom, and in what manner he pleaſes, of doing according to his will in heaven and in earth, is that branch of his prerogative which eminently entitles him to the deſignation of "King "of kings, and Lord of lords."

From what has been obſerved on this ſubject, we are taught the *reaſonableneſs* of *ſubmitting* to the divine *will*. God is the Supreme Potter, and has an undoubted right to do with the clay as he pleaſes. Whatever he does, he does it with his own.

We

d Iſa. xxxvii. 29. e Luke xix. 27.

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We may alſo perceive the *wiſdom* of this ſubmiſſion. For "who hath reſiſted his will." He "worketh, and no one can let him." A ſinner may ſpurn and toſs at divine ſovereignty; but it is only as "a wild bull in a net." It is impoſſible that he can "flee out of his hand." The preceding illuſtrations aſſure us, that the impotent creature muſt eventually ſubmit. Like the king of Babylon, he may find it neceſſary to confeſs this attribute, from that conviction which is the fruit of better experience. For God "will do all "his pleaſure."

A due attention to divine ſovereignty affords *conſolation* under the greateſt adverſities. The Chriſtian has ſtill reaſon to rejoice, that nothing happens to him by chance, or merely by the will of man. He may have reaſon to blame himſelf, or to blame others, as ſecondary cauſes. But he knows that he muſt not reſt here, leſt he ſhould ſeem to reflect on the Firſt Cauſe. How much ſoever he may regret any adverſe event, he diſcerns the propriety of ſubmiſſion. For he knows that he might as well think of plucking the ſun out of the firmament, as of counteracting any of the determinations of that God whoſe "coun-"ſel ſhall ſtand." The tidings delivered by Samuel to Eli muſt have been afflicting beyond conception. Yet this is all his anſwer; "It is the "LORD, let him do what ſeemeth him good [f]." When Paul declared his intention of going up to Jeruſalem, Agabus, by the ſpirit of prophecy, aſſured

[f] 1 Sam. iii. 18.

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ſured him, that in this caſe he ſhould be delivered bound into the hands of the Gentiles. On this prediction, the diſciples beſought him with tears, that he would relinquiſh his deſign. But when they found that he perſiſted in it, they "ceaſed; "ſaying, The will of the Lord be done g." They perceived by his firmneſs, as connected with the prophetical warning of Agabus, that his mind was under a ſuperior influence. Above all, it affords conſolation to the Chriſtian, that this irreſiſtible will is that of a Father, who can do him no injury, who will aſſuredly make all things work together for his good. Thus, when we pray that his "will may be done," we are commanded to view him as "our Father."

This doctrine gives us an affecting view of our own *meanneſs* in the ſight of God. We ſee the Supreme Agent, in his ſovereign diſpenſation, treating men as "duſt and aſhes." Good reaſon have we therefore to abaſe ourſelves at his footſtool, to entertain the moſt humiliating thoughts of all that we are and poſſeſs, and to join in the confeſſion of Nebuchadnezzar: "All the inhabi-"tants of the earth are reputed as nothing." Whence proceeded this language, ſo different from what he once held? Merely from a view of divine ſovereignty as wonderfully exemplified on himſelf.

We alſo learn the neceſſity of humble *adoration*. "With God is terrible majeſty:" and it

g Acts xxi. 10.—14.

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eminently appears in this, that "he giveth not "account of any of his matters."

In fine, we might ſafely conclude, that the ſovereignty of God could not but ſignally *appear* in the work of our *redemption*, even although it were leſs expreſsly revealed. We perceive this character indelibly impreſſed on the works of nature. It is the turning hinge of the whole work of Providence. What is this, but a continued execution of the ſovereign and immutable will of JEHOVAH? Is not the whole hiſtory of mankind a commentary on this perfection? Can we ſuppoſe, then, that there is a thick veil thrown over it, in the greateſt of all the works of God? The kingdoms of this world have only been monumental pillars for recording its glory. Many of them lie in ruins. But the legend is perfectly diſtinct. As it was written in their elevation, it is equally written in their fall. This divine character eminently appears in the typical kingdom of Iſrael; in its formation, and in its adminiſtration. And is it loſt in the antitype? Is that kingdom which ſhall never have an end, and which ſhall break down every thing that oppoſes it, the only one in which this unalienable attribute of its Sovereign is not diſcernible? Thoſe who entertain this idea, have a very different view of matters from that illuſtrious miniſter of this kingdom, the apoſtle Paul: "It is not of "him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but "of God that ſheweth mercy." Their ideas of this kingdom run directly counter to thoſe of the glorious

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glorious Sovereign, who thus addreſſes the Father: "Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe "and prudent, and haſt revealed them to babes. "Even ſo, Father; *for ſo it ſeemed good in thy "ſight.*"

SECTION IX.

Of Divine Providence.—General Obſervations.—A Particular Providence proved, from the Means employed by God;—from the Concatenation of Circumſtances;—the Seaſon of Operation;—the Diſcovery of Secret Sin;—the Reſemblance between Sin and Puniſhment;—the Choice of Inſtruments for puniſhing Iniquity;—the Circumſtances of Puniſhment;—Events of a Contingent Nature.

We have already ſeen, that the ſacred volume contains an hiſtory of Providence. This includes ſo great a variety of particulars, that, in ſo ſhort a ſketch as that deſigned in this work, I can ſcarcely enter on it. But as the ſubject is of the greateſt importance, it may not be improper to take notice of a few things with reſpect to the doctrine of Providence in general; and alſo briefly to ſhew, that this providential operation is of a moſt particular nature.

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I ſhall, *firſt*, make a few obſervations with reſpect to Providence in general.

1. The Providence of God is merely the execution of his eternal and unalterable *purpoſe*, as to all thoſe creatures which he hath brought into being. As the God of Providence, "his kingdom "ruleth over all.—The eyes of all things wait "upon him." Whether his operation reſpect men or angels, individuals or kingdoms; whatſoever he doth, it is for the completion of his eternal and immutable will of purpoſe. "He *doth* according "to his *will* in the army of heaven; and among "the inhabitants of the earth [h]."—He "worketh "all things after the counſel of his own will [i]." When the ten tribes had withdrawn from their allegiance to the houſe of David, and the men of Judah and Benjamin were aſſembled to fight againſt them, "to bring the kingdom again to "Rehoboam," they received this warning from God; "Ye ſhall not go up, nor fight againſt your "brethren the children of Iſrael: return every "man to his houſe, for the thing is *from me* [k]."

2. The inſpired hiſtory of providential operation diſcovers the true *cauſe* of human *proſperity*. Men greatly err on this ſubject. If, either as individuals, or in a collective capacity, they enjoy the ſmiles of proſperity; they generally conſider theſe as the fruit of their own exertions. They ſay, "Mine own arm hath gotten me all "this wealth." They arrogate the honour of that Babylon they have built, to "the might of "their

h Dan. iv. 35. i Eph. i. 11. k 1 Kings xii. 21.—24.

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"their power;" although as its name is, it often eventually proves their *confuſion*. Where a natural man would have diſcerned no other cauſe but human prudence in complying with a favourable propoſal, the pious ſteward of Abraham's houſe perceived and acknowledged the hand of God. "The LORD," ſaid he, "hath proſpered my way." We may remark, indeed, that thoſe are moſt likely to obſerve the divine operation conſequentially, who are ſincerely concerned to acknowledge God in all their ways, and previouſly to ſeek a diſplay of his hand. Such was the conduct of this excellent ſervant. He was eager to know "whether "the LORD had made his journey proſperous or "not." He accordingly remarked the various ſteps of Providence; his being led in the right way to the houſe of his maſter's brethren, the appearance of Rebekah, the exact correſpondence between her language and conduct, and what had previouſly been the matter of his prayer: and on all theſe accounts he bleſſed the LORD God of his maſter Abraham [k]. This is truly a moſt beautiful, intereſting and inſtructive hiſtory. It contains a ſtriking picture of the character, and a practical demonſtration of the worth, of a faithful meſſenger; who, while he zealouſly ſerved man, had his eye principally directed to God.

We learn whence Joſeph "was a proſperous "man." This is the reaſon aſſigned; "The "LORD was with him [l]." The hand of God is ſometimes ſo very evident in this reſpect, that it

k Gen. xxiv. 42.—48. 56. l Gen. xxxix. 2.

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is obſerved even by unrenewed men, or by ſuch as are ſtrangers to divine revelation. Laban made this acknowledgment to Jacob; "I have learned "by experience, that the LORD hath bleſſed me "for thy ſake [m]." Potiphar, Joſeph's maſter, "ſaw that the LORD was with him, and that the "LORD made all that he did to proſper in his "hand [n]."

Becauſe the event depends on divine Providence, means are not therefore to be neglected. For in this, as in his other operations, God is pleaſed to put honour on theſe. But while diligent in the uſe of lawful means, we muſt wholly depend on God for the ſucceſs. For his bleſſing alone can make them effectual.

3. We alſo diſcover the *cauſe* of *adverſity*. We find that affliction riſeth not out of the ground; that trouble ſpringeth not from the duſt; that this evil never exiſts, "and the LORD hath "not done it." By the Sacred Hiſtory, we are taught to acknowledge the hand of God in every ſpecies of adverſity. Even in thoſe things which are viewed as the common accidents of life, we are directed to the ſupreme cauſe. While every thing proſpers with one, another is thwarted in all his undertakings, and eventually oppreſſed with poverty. Hannah, in her ſong of praiſe, unravels this myſtery. "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh "rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiſeth "up the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth up the "beggar from the dunghill, to ſet them among "princes, and to make them inherit the throne of "glory:

m Gen. xxx. 27. n Gen. xxxix. 3. 23.

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"glory: for the pillars of the earth are the "LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them [o]."

God hath never meant that the dispensations of his Providence should be viewed as a certain test of his love or hatred. In this respect it is said, that "one event happeneth to all." We accordingly find, that prosperity is often showered on the wicked, whom the LORD hateth; while the objects of his eternal and unalterable love are visited with severe affliction. At the same time it appears from particular instances, that even temporal prosperity is sometimes meant as a token of God's approbation of the conduct of persons or nations, while adversity hath a contrary language. Concerning Uzziah king of Judah it is said, that "as long as he sought the LORD, God "made him to prosper [p]." We have many proofs that righteousness alone "exalteth a nation." The children of Israel still prospered, while they adhered to their God: and when they returned to him, after their apostacies, he still delivered them.

In many instances, we cannot certainly know the design of affliction with respect to individuals. For in this respect, as has been formerly observed, the LORD often displays his sovereignty; or he severely chastises, because he hath a secret purpose of love, and hath determined to make the greatest afflictions "work together for "good." But the design is often expressly declared in Scripture, or, as may be seen after-

o 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8.

p 2 Chron. xxvi. 5.

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wards, moſt clearly expreſſed in the peculiar nature of the diſpenſation. As to national calamities, we are left in no heſitation. Sin is ſtill pointed out as the procuring cauſe.

We learn that "fire and hail, ſnow and vapour, ſtormy wind, fulfil his word [q]." But the general doctrine is illuſtrated by many particular inſtances. The cities of the plain were deſtroyed by fire from the LORD. "Fire and hail" were among the plagues of Egypt [r]. Hailſtones were the inſtruments of divine vengeance againſt the Amorites, when their five kings gathered their forces againſt Gibeon [s]. When God "cauſeth "his vapours to aſcend," he "proclaims liberty "to the peſtilence [t]." When he blows with his wind, "his enemies ſink as lead in the mighty "waters [u]." When the earth opens her mouth, and like a cruel mother devours her own brood; whatever be the influence of ſecondary cauſes, we are taught to view this awful calamity as a viſitation for ſin [v]. When God "calls for fa"mine," or "turneth the fruitful land into bar"renneſs, it is for the wickedneſs of them that "dwell therein [w]." Men may philoſophically deſcant on the riſe and fall of empires. They may aſcribe theſe to accident, or to cauſes merely of a political nature. But although there is a ſubordinate operation of ſecondary cauſes, we are aſſured from the word of God, that theſe events muſt be ultimately aſcribed to his operation as "the

q Pſal. cxlviii 8. r Exod. ix. 3. s Joſh. x 11. t Jer. xxxiv. 17.
u Exod. xv. 10. v Iſa. xxix. 6. w Pſal. cvii. 34.

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"the Governor among the nations." We muſt not, indeed, loſe ſight of divine ſovereignty. But we do not recollect an inſtance in which the overthrow of rulers, or the deſolation of kingdoms, is not repreſented as immediately the effect of vengeance for ſin. As it is God who "putteth down "one, and ſetteth up another," the reaſon is thus aſſigned;—"For in the hand of the LORD there "is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mix-"ture, and he poureth out of the ſame: but the "dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth ſhall "wring them out, and drink them [x]." When God gave a commiſſion to Iſrael to exterminate the nations of Canaan, it was, as has been ſeen, becauſe of their atrocious iniquity. Therefore did "the land itſelf vomit out her inhabitants [y]." It was not ſo much the power of the Perſians, as the guilt of the Babylonians, that overthrew their extenſive empire. The holy and juſt God had ſaid; "I will puniſh the world for their evil, "and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will "cauſe the arrogancy of the proud to ceaſe, and "will lay low the haughtineſs of the terrible [z]."

Nor do we merely learn from the ſacred records, that wickedneſs in general procures puniſhment from God. We have a particular account of many ſins, which bring grievous calamities, or complete deſtruction on a people: and the fatal effects of theſe are illuſtrated by facts.

Beſides

x Pſal. lxxv. 7, 8. y Lev. xviii. 25. z Iſa. xiii. 11.

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Beſides unnatural luſt, pride, luxury and idleneſs are mentioned in the bill of indictment found againſt Sodom, and referred to by the Supreme Judge for alarming Jeruſalem: "Behold, this "was the iniquity of thy ſiſter Sodom. Pride, "fulneſs of bread, and abundance of idleneſs was "in her and her daughters;—therefore I took "them away as I ſaw good [a]." Similar is the charge exhibited againſt Tyrus and her prince. "Take up a lamentation for Tyrus, and ſay unto "Tyrus, O thou that art ſituate at the entry of "the ſea, which art a merchant of the people for "many iſles, Thus ſaith the LORD God, O Ty-"rus, thou haſt ſaid, I am of perfect beauty.— "—Say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus ſaith the "LORD God, Becauſe thine heart is lifted up, "and thou haſt ſaid, I am a god, I ſit in the ſeat "of God, in the midſt of the ſeas.—Behold, "therefore, I will bring ſtrangers upon thee, the "terrible of the nations: and they ſhall draw "their ſwords againſt the beauty of thy wiſdom, "and they ſhall defile thy brightneſs. They ſhall "bring thee down to the pit, and thou ſhalt die "the death of them that are ſlain in the midſt of "the ſeas [b]."

Carnal confidence is a ſin nearly connected with thoſe already mentioned: and is pointed out in Scripture as haſtening the deſtruction of a people. Moab truſted in her works, and in her treaſures; therefore ſhe was taken, and the ſpoilers

[a] Ezek. xvi. 49, 50. [b] Ezek. xxvii. 2. 3.; xxviii. 2. 7, 8.

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ſpoilers came upon every city [c]. Not to mention a variety of other iniquities, uncleanneſs, pride, luxury, and carnal confidence, are eminently chargeable againſt Britain as a nation: and when we conſider both the threatenings, and the examples of God's ſeverity recorded in Scripture, we have great reaſon to be afraid of his judgments. Our guilt is far more aggravated than that of Moab, of Tyre, or even of Sodom; becauſe of our unſpeakably ſuperior privileges.

The plagues of Egypt, and the deſtruction of Pharaoh with his hoſt, proclaim the danger of unbelief, and of hardening our hearts againſt the teſtimony of God. They at the ſame time diſplay his holy jealouſy with reſpect to his people, and declare the certainty of the deſtruction of thoſe who continue to oppreſs and perſecute them. The oppreſſion of the people of God has often proved the crowning guilt of a nation, that by which the cup of her iniquity was filled, and the immediate cauſe of the cup of trembling being put into her hand. This was the caſe with Babylon. Hence this aggravated guilt is mentioned, as if it had been the only procuring cauſe of the deſtruction of this great empire. God puts this language into the mouth of his oppreſſed Church: "The violence done to me, and to my "fleſh, be upon Babylon, and my blood upon the "inhabitants of Chaldea [d]."

The inſpired hiſtory of Providence affords light by which we may form a true eſtimate of thoſe wars

c Jer. xlviii. 7, 8. d Jer. li. 35.

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wars that deſolate the earth. The reaſons aſſigned for them by nations are generally doubtful, often falſe. They may plead the love of liberty, while the genuine principle is ambition; or zeal for religion, while they are ſolely concerned about their temporal intereſt; or urge the plea of ſelf-defence, while actuated by inſatiable avarice, or cruel revenge. But whatever be the motives aſſigned by the contending parties, or by which they are really influenced; whatever be the cauſes from which war more immediately proceeds; we certainly know, that, as permitted by God, it is a puniſhment inflicted on all who are engaged in it. Some have not bluſhed to vindicate war, as neceſſary to prevent the too great increaſe of the human ſpecies. "Wars and fightings" not only proceed from men's luſts, but are deſigned by the Supreme Ruler for the puniſhment of theſe. This is one of the ſcourges that he employs, to remind guilty man of a ſtate of retribution. We may therefore well "be afraid of the ſword; for wrath "bringeth the puniſhments of the ſword, that we "may know there is a judgment [e]."

4. The providence of God may be viewed as either common or ſpecial. His *common* providence extends to all his creatures without exception; that which is *ſpecial*, regards rational creatures, men and angels. While men in general are the objects of his ſpecial providence, it is more peculiarly exerciſed towards the Church, and in a way of eminence towards all who are her genuine members.

[e] Job xix. 29.

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members. The Church is deſcribed as God's huſbandry [f]; as his vineyard, which he waters every moment, which, leſt any hurt it, he keeps night and day [g]. While all her members enjoy a ſpecial protection, this in a far higher ſenſe is the privilege of believers. "The eyes of the "LORD run to and fro throughout the whole "earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of "them whoſe heart is perfect towards him [h]."

But on theſe things I do not particularly enter. All that is further intended, is to illuſtrate the falſity of that idea, which is entertained by many who call themſelves Chriſtians, that divine providence is merely of a general nature. They perhaps go not ſo far as the Epicureans, who thought it unworthy of God to trouble himſelf with the affairs of men. But they make great approaches to this ſyſtem; as they ſuppoſe that although God exerciſe ſome care about his creatures in general, he leaves them to the exertion of their own powers, in their actions, without any particular concourſe on his part; that many events depend merely on chance; and that many actions are ſo inſignificant as not to merit his attention. In oppoſition to this doctrine, which in fact involves a total denial of providence, we mean to ſhew, from a variety of conſiderations,

Secondly, That providential operation is of a moſt particular nature, extending to all creatures, even the meaneſt, and to all their actions, however

[f] 1 Cor. iii. 9. [g] Iſa. xxvii. 3. [h] 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

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ever insignificant in themselves; and that all these are regulated for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and in subserviency to the divine glory *.

1. This appears from the *means* that God is pleased to employ. In the general tenor of his operation, he makes use of means. But these are often in themselves so *insignificant*, and so inadequate to the end, that we could not suppose it to be accomplished without an immediate operation on the part of God. The LORD had declared by his servant Elisha, that he would deliver Moab into the hands of the three confederate kings. But how strange were the means by which this prediction was fulfilled! At the desire of Elisha, ditches were made in the valley in which the army of the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, were encamped. Against morning these were filled with water. When the Moabites arose early, the sun shone upon the water, and it appeared to them red as blood. They immediately concluded that the allied princes had turned their arms against each other. They said, "This is blood; "the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten "one another; now, therefore, Moab, to the "spoil. And when they came to the camp of Is- "rael, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moab- "ites, so that they fled before them [i]." By such unlikely

* In this illustration, I almost entirely abstain from a consideration of any of those works, which may properly be viewed as miraculous; lest it should be objected by the enemies of a particular providence, that from these we can form no just estimate of God's ordinary operation.

i 2 Kings iii. 21.—24.

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unlikely means did the confederated army obtain a complete victory, and the prophecy receive its accompliſhment. God is pleaſed to employ ſuch contemptible means, that his almighty operation may be more clearly diſcerned, and that the glory of the work may redound wholly to himſelf.

Often he employs means, which in their own nature and tendency are directly *contrary* to the end. God had ſworn to Abraham that he would multiply his ſeed as the ſand on the ſea-ſhore. Yet he caſts them into the furnace of Egypt, and ſubjects them to ſevere perſecution. But the more they were oppreſſed, the more they multiplied. In an extraordinary dream, he revealed to Joſeph his future exaltation, and the obeiſance he ſhould receive from the ſons of his father. But through what a devious courſe muſt he reach the promiſed greatneſs! Only through the deepeſt abaſement, can he attain the dignity awaiting him. He muſt be yet more hated of his brethren, ere he can be the object of their veneration. He muſt be ſold as a ſlave, ere he can be honoured as a maſter. He muſt loſe all that character and confidence that he had even as a ſlave, and be ſhut up in priſon, under the imputation of one of the vileſt of crimes, ere he can appear as the moſt diſtinguiſhed perſonage in Egypt, next to Pharaoh. He muſt be more than once in danger of death, and be dead to his father; before he can be the inſtrument of preſerving him and the church in his houſe. Nor was it merely the will of God that this abaſement ſhould

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ſhould precede his exaltation. Although in its own nature diametrically oppoſite, it directly led to this event. Had he not been ſold by his brethren, he could never have come into Potiphar's family. Had he not been falſely accuſed, he would not in all probability have been caſt into priſon. Had not this been the caſe, or had he ſerved any one but the captain of the king's guard, although accuſed of the ſame crime, moſt probably he would not have been caſt into the king's priſon, but into ſome ordinary one. Thus he would have had no opportunity of ſeeing the impriſoned officers of the court, or of being at length known to Pharaoh as an interpreter of dreams.

Providence accompliſhes its end even by the *wickedneſs* of man. This is one of the deep things of God, that he can employ the enemies of religion in his work, make uſe of their corruptions for the fulfilment of his purpoſes, direct and overrule their conduct, and yet act in a way perfectly conſiſtent with his own infinite holineſs; the immorality of the action being wholly their own. God overruled the deſpicable envy of Joſeph's brethren for the ſalvation of the Church. Their intention was wicked and cruel, but his was holy and merciful. They indeed might be ſaid to ſend Joſeph into Egypt, as they ſold him to the Iſhmaelites when on their way thither. But in all this the pious Joſeph ſaw an higher hand. "God ſent me before you," ſays he to his brethren, "to preſerve you a poſterity in the "earth, and to ſave your lives by a great deliver-

"ance.

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"ance. So now, it was not *you* that ſent me hi-
"ther, but God.—As for you, ye thought evil
"againſt me, but God meant it unto good [k]."
Thus did he employ Pharaoh as an inſtrument for bringing his people to obey his call in leaving Egypt. They had been ſo long ſettled in that country, had become ſo attached to the carnal gratifications which it afforded, and were ſo contaminated with the idolatry of their neighbours, that, had not Pharaoh been a cruel tyrant, they in all probability, as Moſes feared, would have poſitively refuſed to comply with the call of God. They had in a manner forgotten the promiſe made to their fathers. But he ſends the road of perſecution, to drive them out of this land of idols.

II. The ſame thing is evident from the wonderful *concatenation* of circumſtances, which is often obſervable in ſubſerviency to ſome great event. The various circumſtances which led to the exaltation of Joſeph, and to the preſervation of the Church, appear as ſo many links in one extenſive chain. Some of them are very minute, and may ſeem in themſelves of little importance. But they are ſo cloſely connected with the predicted end, that even in theſe we cannot but diſcern the hand of an all-wiſe agent.—I enlarge not, however, on this proof, having illuſtrated it fully in another place [l].

k Gen. xlv. 7, 8.; l. 20.

l Sermons on the Heart, Vol. i. p. 441, 445.

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What is the book of Eſther, but an hiſtory of the wonderful ſteps of divine Providence for the preſervation of the Church, and for giving a ſignal overthrow to her enemies throughout the greateſt part of the known world? What a trivial circumſtance paves the way for the great event, and for all thoſe which were previouſly neceſſary in order to its accompliſhment! Ahaſuerus, in the midſt of a drunken revel, takes one whim; and Vaſhti his queen acts under the influence of another. He thought fit to ſend for her, "to ſhew the people and the princes her "beauty;" but ſhe refuſed to go, thinking perhaps that it was inconſiſtent with her dignity to appear in a company of men "merry with "wine." She is accordingly diſgraced; and Eſther, a Jewiſh orphan, whoſe lineage was unknown at court, is preferred to all the virgins, collected from the various provinces of the Perſian empire, and choſen in the room of Vaſhti.

The choice of Eſther was not the only important link in this chain. There was another, not leſs neceſſary. This was the advancement of Haman, alſo a ſtranger, and an hereditary enemy of the whole Jewiſh nation. The king "ſet his ſeat "above all the princes that were with him." The moſt prominent feature in the character of this Amalekite was pride. Had not his pride been hurt, the wiſdom and power of God would not have been diſplayed in the deliverance of his people. The king had commanded that all his ſervants ſhould bow and do reverence to Haman. Mordecai,

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Mordecai, the Jew, Eſther's couſin, was the only one at the court of Perſia who would not give Haman the commanded reverence; moſt probably becauſe it was of ſuch a kind, as in his judgment belonged to God alone. The injured pride of Haman, like a cankered ſore, ſwelled into the moſt cruel reſentment. He thought it below his dignity to ſingle out Mordecai as his victim. Nay, it ſeemed a revenge unworthy of his greatneſs, that this puny offender ſhould be the only ſufferer. He determined to glut his reſentment, by making a ſacrifice of the whole Jewiſh nation. The bloody, the irrevocable edict was accordingly paſſed, and tranſmitted by expreſs to all the provinces, that the Jewiſh name might become extinct in one day.

Even after the edict was publiſhed, the adverſary of the Jews could have no enjoyment of his greatneſs, as long as Mordecai ſat in the king's gate. Haman thought, perhaps, that this dreadful edict might have a little tamed the ſpirit of Mordecai. But he ſtill "moved not for him." He therefore changes his reſolution; and determines to anticipate his revenge, as to this obnoxious individual. He could not reſt, therefore, till he got a gallows made for Mordecai, on which he was to be hanged next day. But obſerve, how God counterplots Satan! Now, that Haman can take reſt in his bed, the king can find none. "On "that night could not the king ſleep, and he "commanded to bring the book of records of the "chronicles; and they were read before the

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" king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Tereſh, two of " the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the " door, who thought to lay hands on the king. " And the king ſaid, What honour and dignity " hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then " ſaid the king's ſervants unto him, There is no- " thing done for him [m]." On what a ſlender thread was the life of this faithful ſervant ſuſpended! Had Ahaſuerus ſlept as uſual that night, there is every reaſon to believe that Mordecai would have periſhed next day. Although the king's ſleep had " fled away from him," had he called for any entertainment but that of reading, for any other book but the records of his kingdom; or had his ſervants read in any other place, but that which gave an account of the king's preſervation from a conſpiracy; in all probability Haman's ſuit would have been granted, and his purpoſe fulfilled, before Eſther could have heard of his ſcheme. For at the very time that Ahaſuerus aſked the queſtion mentioned above, Haman had come into the outer court, " to ſpeak " unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows " he had prepared for him [n]."

How narrow the hinge on which the ſalvation of the whole Church turned! This was no other than the uncertain humour of a deſpot. So well was Eſther acquainted with this, and ſuch reaſon had ſhe to fear it, eſpecially as ſhe had " not been " called to come in unto the king for thirty days," that

m Eſth. vi. 1.—3. n Ver. 4, 5.

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that when ſhe reſolved to preſent herſelf before him, ſhe well knew that her life was at ſtake. Had Ahaſuerus been in a fretful mood, when Eſther appeared, or had he taken umbrage at her coming without being called; her fate would have been worſe than that of Vaſhti. According to the nature of the Perſian law, ſhe muſt have periſhed; and who would then have ventured to intercede for her people?

It was the will of God, not only to defeat the deſigns of the wicked Haman, but to give the Church cauſe of triumph in the ruin of this implacable adverſary. But his diſgrace is deferred, till he had attained the greateſt honour that could be conferred on a ſubject. Not only did Ahaſuerus "ſet his ſeat above all the princes," but as Haman himſelf boaſted, Queen Eſther permitted no man to enter with the king to her banquet, but himſelf. This new honour ſhed a gleam of joy on his rankled heart [n]. But then, when he had reached the higheſt pinnacle of dependent greatneſs, he is hurled into the abyſs of ruin: and it appears from the event, that the gallows, which he had prepared for Mordecai, was deſigned by God for himſelf.

Although, however, Mordecai was not only ſaved but exalted; although Haman was brought to deſtruction; there ſtill ſeemed to be one inſuperable obſtacle to the preſervation of the church. This was the irrevocable nature of the laws of the Medes and Perſians. But even this was pro-

[n] Eſth. v. 9.

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videntially ordered and overruled for the greater triumph and ſecurity of the people of God. For had the law been otherwiſe, their deſtruction would only have been prohibited. But as the king's edict could not, according to the conſtitution of the empire, be expreſsly recalled; another was publiſhed, empowering the Jews not only to ſtand on their defence, but to avenge themſelves on all their enemies. It was now more than two months ſince the former edict had been publiſhed. They had, therefore, full time to know who were their enemies, and who anxiouſly waited for the day of their deſtruction. Thus alſo they were ſeconded and ſupported in the lawful means they uſed for their own preſervation, by the rulers of the different provinces[o]: and by the deſtruction of thoſe "who ſought "their hurt," had a foundation laid for their ſafety againſt any attempt of a ſimilar kind, when there might be no Mordecai to manage, and no Eſther to intercede for them.

From the whole it is evident, that Mordecai ſpoke not in the way of mere conjecture, when he ſaid to the queen; "Who knoweth, whether "thou art come to the kingdom for ſuch a time "as this[p]?" There was nothing miraculous in all this concatenation of circumſtances. But he, who can ſuppoſe that it could be wholly the effect of the operation of ſecondary cauſes, without any ſpecial operation of the Firſt, is on the high way to atheiſm.

III. That

o Eſth. ix. 1.—3. p Eſth. iv. 14.

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III. That this operation is of a moſt particular nature, frequently appears from the *ſeaſon* of it. When the LORD is about to work deliverance, he often allows matters to come to extremity; ſo that no rational hope can be formed from the ordinary operation of ſecondary cauſes. God had determined to deliver his ancient people from the power of the Philiſtines. But he would not do it, till they were reduced to a very abject ſtate, and deprived of the ordinary means of deliverance. "In the day of battle there was neither ſword nor "ſpear found in the hand of any of the people "that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with "Saul and with Jonathan his ſon was there "found [q]." The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was an event of ſuch importance, that for effecting it, God had purpoſed to overthrow the whole Chaldean empire. But it was delayed, till his people began to deſpair of relief, and expreſſed themſelves in this manner; "Our "bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, we are cut "off for our parts [r]." God is pleaſed to work in this manner, that the operation may be more evidently his own, and that his perfections may be more ſignally glorified. In conſequence of ſuch deliverances, even the heathen are made to ſay; "The LORD hath done great things for them." Can his own people refuſe to add, "The LORD "hath done great things for us?"

IV. The particularity of providential operation is often manifeſted by the *diſcovery* of ſecret *ſin*.

q 1 Sam. xiii. 22. r Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

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As the eyes of God "are upon the ways of men," as "there is no darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death, "where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves;" even in the preſent life he often brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs. From the Sacred Hiſtory it appears, that long before the giving of the law, it was a divine ordinance, that the widow of him who died childleſs ſhould be married by his brother, or by the neareſt of kin. Hence the crime of Tamar was conſidered as puniſhable with death. For ſhe was viewed as virtually an adultereſs, being reſerved for the ſurviving brother of Er and Onan. But, in the wonderful diſpoſal of Providence, her condemnation is overruled as the occaſion of the diſcovery of Judah's ſecret iniquity with her, and alſo of his being brought to a conviction and confeſſion of his guilt in withholding from her his ſon Shelah. When ſhe preſented Judah's bracelets, and ſignet, and ſtaff, he acknowledged them, ſaying; "She hath been more righteous than I[t]." So remarkable are the ways in which ſin is often brought to light, that even worldly men are laid under a neceſſity of acknowledging the hand of God. Sometimes the tranſgreſſor is moſt unaccountably infatuated. All the prudence diſplayed in his former conduct ſeems at once to forſake him; ſo that he acts as if he were determined to be his own accuſer. At other times, the very ſchemes that he has deviſed with the greateſt art for concealing his guilt, prove the occaſion of a diſcovery.

[s] Job xxxiv. 21, 22. [t] Gen. xxxviii. 26.

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very. This is eſpecially the caſe with reſpect to murder. From the days of Cain till this hour, blood hath had a loud, a powerful cry.

In this manner did the ſons of Jacob interpret the language of Providence, in the treatment they met with from their unknown brother. Till then they appear to have had no compunction for their crime, which had hitherto been buried in their own breaſts. But a cluſter of circumſtances, in their preſent ſituation, ſeems to have flaſhed conviction on their obdurate minds. They were at this time in that very land into which they had ſent their brother as a ſlave. The ruler of it under Pharaoh accuſed them of not being "true "men;" and falſe had they been to him, and to their father. As they had formerly caſt Joſeph into a pit, they had themſelves been all caſt into priſon. He refuſed to acquit them from the charge he had brought againſt them, and to deliver up the hoſtage he demanded, on any other condition than that of their bringing with them Benjamin, the darling of their father, and as they might imagine, the only ſurviving child of Rachel. Could they hear this requiſition, without reflecting on their conduct towards her other ſon, whom they had hated, for no other reaſon than that which made them deſpair of being able to bring Benjamin,—becauſe "his father loved him "more than all his brethren[u]?" They had refuſed to liſten to all the entreaties of Joſeph; and their own, addreſſed to this ſtranger, are treated with

[u] Gen. xxxvii. 4.

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with equal diſregard. It is not ſurpriſing then, that their minds were all at once ſtruck with the ſame conviction, and that they ſpoke with one voice. "They ſaid one to another, We are verily "guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw "the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us; "and we would not hear: therefore is this di-"ſtreſs come upon us. And Reuben anſwered "them, ſaying, Spake I not unto you, ſaying, Do "not ſin againſt the child; and ye would not "hear: therefore behold alſo, *his blood* is *requi-*"*red*[v]."

v. Divine providence is often ſingularly diſplayed in the ſtriking *ſimilarity* that may be obſerved between *ſin* and *puniſhment*. A great variety of examples might be given from Scripture. But I ſhall mention only two or three; having already made ſome obſervations on this head, when treating of the Juſtice of God.

The Egyptians were "guilty of blood," in executing the iniquitous decree of Pharaoh, who commanded that all the male children of the Iſraelites ſhould be drowned in the river Nile: and in the puniſhment of this guilt, the plagues of Egypt had their commencement. God turned into blood the waters of this river, which alone ſupplied the Egyptians with drink[w]. He "gave "them blood to drink, becauſe they were wor-"thy;" and this judgment was a ſtriking figure of that which ſhould be inflicted, according to the ſame

[v] Gen. xlii. 21, 22. [w] Exod. vii. 20.

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ſame plan of retribution, on that antichriſtian body, which "ſpiritually is called Egypt[x]," which by her corruption has converted the precious waters of the ſanctuary into blood, and has alſo been made "drunken with the blood of the ſaints[y]." David had greatly ſinned in the matter of Uriah. The blood of this juſt man called for vengeance. God, in his ſovereign pleaſure, diſpenſed with his own law, in as far as David was perſonally concerned. He intimated to him, that he ſhould not die. But he was pleaſed to give a perpetual memorial of his diſpleaſure in declaring that, becauſe he had killed Uriah with the ſword of the children of Ammon, the ſword ſhould never depart from his houſe. David had previouſly raiſed up evil againſt Uriah in his own houſe, by ſeducing his wife; thus robbing the poor man of his "one little ewe lamb." For this reaſon God ſaid to David, "Behold, I will raiſe "up evil againſt thee out of thine own houſe." And in what manner was this threatening to be fulfilled? The wives and concubines of David were to be defiled by his own ſon[z]. What a ſtrict and awful retribution have we here! blood puniſhed by blood, and one ſin by another of the ſame kind, although far more aggravated, adultery by inceſt! Gehazi, the ſervant of Eliſha, coveted the property of Naaman the leper, and employed ſuch means for obtaining it, as involved himſelf in the guilt of falſehood, and ſubjected his maſter to the imputation of having acted diſhonourably.

x Rev. xi. 8. y Chap. viii. 8.; xvii. 6. z 2 Sam. xii. 9.—11.

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honourably. But in the righteous juſtice of God, he is made to poſſeſs a part of the former property of Naaman, that he coveted not. He went out from the preſence of his maſter, a leper white as ſnow [a]. As God required the blood of righteous Naboth of the houſe of Ahab, there was one peculiar aggravation of the crime, which muſt have been recalled to the recollection of others by a circumſtance attending the puniſhment. When Ahab determined the deſtruction of Naboth, at the inſtigation of his wicked wife, he uſed religion as a pretence. He proclaimed a faſt, and accuſed the good man of blaſphemy. Obſerve the wonderful retribution. By a ſimilar pretence, and with no more ſincerity, Jehu extended the vengeance to the whole poſterity of Ahab. When about to execute it, he ſaid to Jonadab, "Come "with me, and ſee my zeal for the LORD [b]."

VI. The particular operation of Providence is often diſcernible in the choice of the *inſtruments* employed for puniſhing iniquity. It was the will of God to puniſh the cruelty of Haman, the adverſary of the Jews; but he would firſt humble his pride, which had ſet his cruelty a-working. What inſtrument could be ſo completely adapted for this end, as that Mordecai whom he hated more than any human being? This upright Jew had uſed no means which could tend to the deſtruction of his adverſary. He was merely a paſſive inſtrument; and therefore the hand of God was

a 2 Kings v. 27. b 1 Kings xxi. 6.—13.; 2 Kings x. 16.

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was more eminently ſeen in the whole management of this matter. What could give ſuch a wound to the pride of Haman, who knew the great partiality of Ahaſuerus for himſelf, as to learn that Mordecai, that contemptible Jew, whom he had condemned to the gallows, was "the man whom the king delighted to honour?" The command of Ahaſuerus, directed to Haman, muſt have inflicted a ſtill deeper wound. When Haman was aſked by his maſter what ſhould be done to the man whom the king delighted to honour; as he had not the leaſt heſitation that he was himſelf the favoured perſon, he propoſed that very plan that would be moſt gratifying to his own pride. "Let the royal apparel," ſaid he, "be brought, which the king uſeth to wear, and "the horſe that the king rideth upon, and the "crown-royal which is ſet upon his head. And "let this apparel and horſe be delivered to the "hand of one of the king's moſt noble princes, "that he may array the man withal whom the "king delighteth to honour, and bring him on "horſeback through the ſtreet of the city, and "proclaim before him, Thus ſhall be done to the "man whom the king delighteth to honour." All this was Haman commanded to do to Mordecai. The concluſion that his wiſe men and his wife formed from this event, was ſoon verified in the experience of Haman. They ſaid to him, "If Mordecai be of the ſeed of the Jews, before "whom thou haſt begun to fall, thou ſhalt not pre-

"vail

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" vail againſt him, but ſhalt ſurely fall before " him [c]."

It is one ſtrange character of the operation of God, that he often employs inſtruments, whom he finds it neceſſary to puniſh for the very work they have done. We have ſeen, that the uſe he makes of them is perfectly conſiſtent with his own infinite holineſs. But he puniſhes them, becauſe of the wicked motives by which they have been actuated in doing his work. We have formerly referred to the ſevere puniſhment of Sennacherib. Concerning Nebuchadnezzar, a celebrated writer makes the following obſervations: " We ſee in the perſon of this impious, and at " the ſame time victorious king, what are thoſe " men called conquerors. They are for the moſt " part but inſtruments of the divine vengeance. " God exerciſes his juſtice by them, and then " exerciſes it upon them."—Judea " totally falls, " is totally deſtroyed by the divine juſtice, where- " of Nebuchadnezzar is the miniſter. He too " ſhall fall in his turn; and God, who employs " the hand of that prince to chaſtiſe his children, " and pull down his enemies, reſerves him for his " own almighty hand [d]."

VII. The *circumſtances* of puniſhment often demand our attention, as affording a ſtriking proof of a particular operation. The *time* is ſometimes very remarkable. God had determined to abaſe Nebuchadnezzar, becauſe of his pride and vain glory.

c Eſther vi. 7.—13.

d Boſſuet's Univerſal Hiſtory, Vol. i. p. 235, &c.

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glory. The opportunity which Providence embraced was such as signally to display divine operation; and, at the same time, to proclaim the reason of the judgment. While the king walked in the palace of Babylon, he "spake and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built "for the house of the kingdom, by the might of "my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Every word that he utters, is fraught with arrogance and self-importance. It was folly in him to look, with such a temper of mind, on a mass of stone and lime, that might soon be converted into a heap of ruins. Not satisfied, however, with viewing the work with admiration, his thoughts break out into language. Nor does he merely say, "Is not this Babylon?" but it must be "great "Babylon." And why great? Because Nebuchadnezzar had built it. "Is not this *great* Ba- "bylon, that *I* have built?" as if he could impart his own fancied greatness to the work of his masons and carpenters; or because he wished that this greatness should be reflected in the extent and splendour of his imperial city. But the end must not be forgotten;—"built,—for the house "of the kingdom," for a royal palace, for the metropolis of a great empire. By what power was all this effected? Does he acknowledge the true God? Does he mention even his own Bel or Nebo? No. This proud monarch feels as if, after such a wonderful creation, he were great enough to be a god to himself:—"Great Baby- "lon, that I have built,—by my power." This had.

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had been too feeble a mode of expreſſion, in deſcribing ſo aſtoniſhing a work. There muſt be a reduplication of the idea, to give a more enlarged view of his poſſeſſion of this attribute. He talks in a ſuperlative ſtyle, as if entitled to uſe godlike language;—"by the might of my power." And as if the end formerly mentioned,—"for the "houſe of the kingdom," had been of itſelf unworthy of the dignity of the agent, or unequal to the importance of the work, he ſubjoins;—"and for the honour of my majeſty." Here he diſcovers his laſt, his higheſt end. As he ſpeaks without any regard to God, he declares that his building ſuch an elegant metropolis was not for the benefit or comfort of his fellow-men; or merely, or even principally, for the honour of the kingdom of Babylon. He views the whole, only as it related to himſelf. The language had been arrogant enough, had he only ſaid;—"by my power, "for my honour." But the end muſt be notified by the ſame pompous pleonaſm as the means. All this is "for the honour of *my* majeſty."

Let us mark the immediate conſequence. "*While* the word was in the king's mouth, there "fell a voice from heaven, O king Nebuchad-"nezzar, to thee it is ſpoken, Thy kingdom is "departed from thee. And they ſhall drive thee "from men, and thy dwelling ſhall be with the "beaſts of the field [a]." He had in effect "ſet his "mouth againſt the heavens:" and "there fell a "voice" from that exalted throne which he had outraged

[a] Dan. iv. 30.—33.

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outraged by his arrogance. What a fatal blow to his impious egotiſm! "To *thee* it is ſpoken." In the awful ſentence, he is acknowledged as a king: but only to remind him, that there is one infinitely above him, who indeed "beholdeth all "high things, and is a king over all the children "of pride;" and to prepare him for receiving the mortifying intelligence, that his "kingdom is "departed." He is not only ſtript of his royal power, and thruſt out from his palace; but the whole extent of Babylon cannot afford him a ſhelter. Driven from "the houſe of his king-"dom," he muſt have his "dwelling with the "beaſts of the field." He who had "come up "like a lion from the ſwelling of Jordan unto the "habitation of the ſtrong [b]," is not permitted, in his abaſement, even to retain the character of this monarch of the foreſt. So low is "the honour "of his majeſty" brought, that he is "made to "eat graſs as oxen." As this ſentence "fell "from heaven," at the very time that "the word "was in the king's mouth," how ſudden was its execution! "The ſame hour was the thing ful-"filled upon Nebuchadnezzar."

Similar, as to time, was the puniſhment of his grandſon Belſhazzar. In the madneſs of a great feaſt, he would make an experiment more daring than any he had ever made in his more ſober moments. At his command, "they brought the "golden veſſels that were taken out of the tem-"ple of the houſe of God, which was at Jeruſa-

b Jer. li. 44.

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" lem: and the king, and his princes, his wives " and his concubines, drank in them." As if the impiety of profaning the veſſels conſecrated to the true God had been too little, they go as far as poſſible to make him the miniſter of their abominable idolatry. They drank wine, and " they praiſed the gods of gold, and of ſilver, of " braſs, of iron, of wood, and of ſtone." But the judgment of this ungodly prince lingered not. " *In the ſame hour* came forth fingers of a man's " hand, and wrote over againſt the candleſtick," in the moſt conſpicuous place of the royal apartment. And what was the writing? Although the will of God was communicated in a different manner, it was materially the ſame with that expreſſed by the voice from heaven, which was directed to his grandfather. The writing was this; " God hath numbered thy kingdom, and " finiſhed it [c]."

Many ſimilar inſtances of the *ſudden* execution of ſentence againſt evil works are recorded in Scripture. The Iſraelites demanded fleſh, to ſatisfy their luſt. God gave it, but in anger: and to ſhew in the moſt unequivocal manner the cauſe of his diſpleaſure, " while the fleſh was yet be- " tween their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath " of the LORD was kindled againſt the people; " and he ſmote them with a very great plague [d]." Puniſhment overtook both Ananias and his wife Sapphira, as ſoon as they had ſinned [e]. Of the ſame kind was the judgment of King Herod. No ſooner

c Dan. v. 2.—4. 26. d Numb. xi. 33. e Acts v. 1.—10.

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ſooner was his heart fly-blown with pride, than he became a prey to worms. He cordially accepted the baſe adulation of the people, when they impiouſly ſaid, "It is the voice of a god, and not "of a man. And *immediately* the angel of the "Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the "glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave "up the ghoſt [f]."

The *place* of puniſhment is often very remarkable. When Ahab cauſed the juſt Naboth to be murdered, God declared, that where dogs had licked Naboth's blood, dogs ſhould alſo lick the blood of Ahab; and that they ſhould eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, that is, the very field that had belonged to Naboth [g]. How ſtrictly was this fulfilled! Ahab having been mortally wounded in battle, while in his chariot; when his body was brought to Samaria, "one waſhed the chariot "in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up "his blood [h]." About twenty-four years afterwards, when Jehu aſſumed the royal authority, he commanded that Jezebel ſhould be thrown down from a window of the palace. After he had ſpent ſome time in refreſhing himſelf, thinking perhaps that he had treated her with too much indignity, he commanded that ſhe ſhould be buried, as being a king's daughter. But when they went to bury her, "they found no more of her "than the ſkull, and the feet, and the palms of "her hands." It is evident, from the hiſtory, that in this inſtance Jehu had no deſign to co-ope-

T 2 rate

f Acts xii. 22, 23. g 1 Kings xxi. 19. 23. h 2 Kings xxii. 38.

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rate in the confirmation of prophecy. For till he received this information, he had no recollection of the ſentence pronounced againſt her. Then indeed it recurred on his mind. "They came "again, and told him: and he ſaid, This is the "word of the LORD, which he ſpake by his ſer-"vant Elijah the Tiſhbite, ſaying, *In the portion* "*of Jezreel* ſhall dogs eat the fleſh of Jezebel: "and the carcaſe of Jezebel ſhall be as dung up-"on the face of the field, *in the portion of Jezreel*, "ſo that they ſhall not ſay, This is Jezebel[i]." As little was it from any preconcerted deſign on the part of Jehu, that the deſcendants of Ahab were killed in the very place where the blood of Naboth had been wickedly ſhed. "Joram king of "Iſrael, and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, "each in his chariot, and they went out againſt "Jehu, and *met* him in the *portion* of *Naboth* the "Jezreelite[k]." It is remarkable indeed, that the vengeance threatened was brought on the houſe of Ahab, at the very time that the king of Judah was on a viſit to Jeroboam; that he might partake of the puniſhment, as being a deſcendant of the wicked Ahab. Joram, having been wounded in battle againſt the Syrians at Ramah, it was providentially ordered that he ſhould go to Jezreel, rather than to Samaria, to be healed of his wounds. Thither, his couſin Ahaziah had come to ſee him, becauſe he was wounded[l]. There is no evidence that Jehu fixed on this time, from a wiſh to include the king of Judah in the puniſh-

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i 2 Kings ix. 36.—36. k 2 Kings ix. 21. l 2 Kings viii. 29.

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ment of the houſe of Ahab. It does not even appear, that Jehu knew of Ahaziah's being then at Jezreel. But all was the reſult of the immutable purpoſe of God, and accompliſhed by a wonderful operation of his Providence. "The deſtruction "of Ahaziah *was of God*, by coming to Joram: "for, when he was come, he went out with Je-"horam againſt Jehu the ſon of Nimſhi, whom "the LORD had anointed to cut off the *houſe of* "*Ahab* [m]." In like manner, it was the will of God, that the ſons of his brethren, to the number of forty-two, ſhould come from Jeruſalem to Samaria, at this very time, on a viſit to the children of Ahab, who reſided there, that they might be included in the common fate of that devoted family [n].

VIII. I ſhall only add, that the truth of what we have aſſerted appears from thoſe events which are of a *contingent* nature. Events may be called fortuitous or contingent with reſpect to men, as not being influenced by human foreſight, or depending on ſuch an operation of ſecondary cauſes that the reſult can be matter of rational expectation. But none of theſe can be viewed as contingent with reſpect to God. As they are all certainly foreknown to him, they are all diſpoſed and directed by his Providence. Although the iſſue of the lot, if fairly managed, depends not on human ſkill, and lies beyond the reach of human foreſight; yet we have various inſtances of its

m 2 Chron. xxii. 7. n 2 Kings x. 11.—14.; 2 Chron. xxi. 17.

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being ſo regulated by God, as clearly to declare his overruling providence, and to proclaim his will: as in the caſe of Achan [o], of Saul [p], of Jonathan [q], and of Jonah [r]. The unnatural ſons of Jacob had formed no fixed plan as to the manner in which they were to diſpoſe of their brother Joſeph. His being ſold, rather than ſuffered to periſh in a pit, was a mere contingency to them. Not leſs ſo was the appearance of the Iſhmaelites at this time. Of the ſame nature was the circumſtance of his becoming the ſlave of Potiphar. But although theſe things were contingent to them, they were neceſſary according to the eternal purpoſe; and all managed, as we have already ſeen, by a particular providence. Ahab received his death entirely in a fortuitous way, as far as man was concerned. But, as was foretold by Micaiah, it was the decree of the Moſt High that he ſhould fall that day. He uſed every precaution for the preſervation of his life. He diſguiſed himſelf, that he might be unknown in battle; while he ungenerouſly aſked of Jehoſhaphat to appear in his royal apparel, and thus expoſe himſelf to the danger he wiſhed to avoid. He alſo entered the field in complete armour. The thirty-two Syrian captains, at the command of their ſovereign, employed the utmoſt diligence to diſcover Ahab; but, as would appear, in vain. "A certain man," however, "drew a bow at a venture, and ſmote "the king of Iſrael between the joints of the har-
"neſs."

[o] Joſh. vii. 16.—18. [p] 1 Sam. x. 22. [q] 1 Sam. xiv. 42.
[r] Jonah i. 7.

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"nefs[s]." There is no evidence that this was one of the captains, appointed to ſearch for Ahab. This archer ſhot without any particular aim. For he "drew a bow in his ſimplicity," as the words literally ſignify, having no apprehenſion that he would hit the king of Iſrael. But the arrow was directed by the divine hand, to the very ſpot in Ahab's armour by which an arrow might enter, and where he might receive a mortal wound.

The doctrine of a particular providence is fraught with conſolation. What reaſon have we to rejoice, that nothing in our lot can be the effect of mere chance; that every thing which befals us "cometh from the LORD, who is wonder-"ful in counſel, and excellent in working;" and that even thoſe events which may be accidental to us, are all the effect of infinite wiſdom, and produced by the unerring operation of almighty power!

Let us ſtill regard and acknowledge the operation of his hand. Do we enjoy proſperity? Let us remember, that it is God alone who maketh rich or great. Are we viſited with adverſity? We may derive comfort from this conſideration, that "affliction riſeth not out of the ground, and "that trouble ſpringeth not from the duſt." Are we indebted to any of our fellow men as benefactors? Let us not return ingratitude for their kindneſs. But, leaſt of all, let us forget the God of our mercy. Well may we imitate the conduct

s 1 Kings xxii. 34.

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of Ezra, who, while he acknowledged the kindneſs of Artaxerxes, eſpecially remarked the divine hand; ſaying, "Bleſſed be the LORD God "of our fathers, who hath put ſuch a thing as "this in the king's heart [t]." Do we ſuffer unjuſtly from others? Although we have given them no provocation, we may well ſay, "Is there "not a cauſe?" Have we not, times and ways without number, provoked that juſt and holy God, who has an indiſputable right to employ whom he will as the inſtruments of his diſpleaſure? Let us imitate the conduct of David, who, when Shimei the Benjamite reviled and curſed him without a juſt reaſon, ſaid to thoſe who were eager to take vengeance on this worthleſs man, "Let him "alone, and let him curſe; for the LORD hath "bidden him [u]."

Juſtly mayeſt thou, O Chriſtian, take comfort from this precious doctrine. That God, in whom "all live, and are moved, and have their being," who "giveth life, and breath, and all things," is thy God. Thou art not only, in common with others, under the direction of a particular providence, in all thy ways: but to thee it is wholly a providence of love. All the ways of the LORD thy God are truth and mercy. They are all truth, as exactly correſponding with his gracious promiſe; and all mercy, as directly tending to its full accompliſhment. He does not merely compaſs thy path, and thy lying down; but he ſtill ſurrounds thee with his favour, as with a ſhield. Thy

[t] Ezra vii. 27. [u] 2 Sam. xvi. 11.

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Thy ſevereſt adverſities "work together for "good." The ways of thy God may now ſeem covered with darkneſs. But in a little thou ſhalt ſee, that they have been all "prepared as the "morning." Wait, therefore, on the Lord thy God. Commit thy way to him, and he will bring it to paſs. "Many ſorrows ſhall be to the wick-"ed: but he that truſteth in the LORD, mercy "ſhall compaſs him about."

SECTION X.

The Natural Depravity of Man.—Example inſufficient to account for the Symptoms or Univerſality of Human Corruption.—This proved to be Natural, from its Early Appearance;—from the Hiſtory of Seth;—from the Names given to the Antediluvian Patriarchs;—from the Death of Children;—from the Circumſtances which allude to the Manner in which Sin is tranſmitted.

WE have already taken a curſory view of human depravity; of its rapid progreſs and almoſt univerſal dominion, of its influence on the heart, and of its fatal effects. Let us now trace this to its origin; and it will appear that man is indeed "a tranſgreſſor from the womb." From the nature of this work, it would be improper to introduce

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duce thoſe proofs that are merely of a doctrinal kind: and I ſhall not even call the attention of the reader to all the hiſtorical evidence which the Scripture affords. The doctrine of our original corruption might be proved, from the nature of that federal tranſaction into which God entered with man in a ſtate of innocence; from the covenant being made with Adam before the formation of Eve, although it included her as well as her huſband, and on the ſame principle, the poſterity of both; from the curſe pronounced on the ground, *for the ſake of man*, which undoubtedly affects the deſcendants of Adam, no leſs than it did himſelf; from the circumſtance of his calling his wife Eve, that is, "the mother of all living," not immediately after God had bleſſed them, ſaying, "Be fruitful and multiply," nor while they continued in a ſtate of integrity, but after the fall. This, as it clearly ſhews his perſuaſion that all thoſe of her poſterity who ſhould in a ſpiritual ſenſe deſerve the name of *living*, ſhould be made alive by virtue of that Seed, who, according to the promiſe, was to ſpring from her; at the ſame time teſtifies his conviction that they ſhould all by nature be under the ſentence of ſpiritual and eternal *death*. Without entering into a particular conſideration of theſe, and of ſeveral other proofs of the ſame kind, I ſhall confine myſelf to a few of a different deſcription.

1. It is plain from Scripture-hiſtory, that the corruption of man proceeds not merely, or chiefly, from *example*. Imitation is indeed a power-

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ful principle in our nature; but it cannot produce all the effects which have been aſcribed to it. If there be no corrupt bias in the heart of man, the principle of imitation muſt, where circumſtances are equal, have equal effects, although of an oppoſite kind. It muſt operate as powerfully in following a good, as an evil, example. But how far this is from being the caſe, let the experience of mankind declare.

The crime of Cain was not only heinous in itſelf, but highly aggravated. It was not merely murder, one of the moſt horrid crimes that can be perpetrated by man, but fratricide; and fratricide committed under the form of perſecution for righteouſneſs' ſake. Abel had given no provocation to his brother. He had trampled on no law human or divine. He had not directed a ſingle word of reproach againſt Cain. But "he ſlew "him, becauſe his own works were evil, and his "brother's righteous[v]." He committed this crime in the very face of God, after being favoured with an immediate revelation, warning him of his duty, and encouraging him by a promiſe of acceptance, as well as of dominion over his brother[w].

The wickedneſs of Cain could not proceed from imitation: for he was the firſt murderer. It could not be the effect of a gradual progreſs in guilt, in conſequence of a long courſe of perſonal iniquity, or the influence of example in a long ſucceſſion of ages. Although the firſt man born of

[v] 1 John iii. 12. [w] Gen. iv. 7.

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of woman, he was as wicked as any who have ſince exiſted. He went as far as he poſſibly could, according to the nature of his ſin; and we can ſcarcely form the idea of one more horrid. His guilt was further aggravated by ſubſequent arrogance, obduracy, and impiety.

New modes of ſinning may be deviſed, in conſequence of the exerciſe of man's fertile invention in the ſervice of Satan. But theſe are only varied operations of the ſame corrupt principle. Or ſin may become more general, from the influence of example and perſuaſion. The *ways* of man may become more flagitious; but the principle in the *heart* is continually evil [x].

It may be ſaid perhaps, that the example of Abel, although in the ſame family, affords a proof that the corruption of Cain was not hereditary. But let it be obſerved, that we find nothing in the hiſtory of Cain, which diſtinguiſhes him as naturally a worſe man than his brother. It was only "in proceſs of time," when he preſented an offering to the LORD, that the wickedneſs of his heart appeared. We are informed indeed that Abel was righteous, while the character of Cain was quite the reverſe. But did the righteouſneſs of Abel originate from a better nature, or from the exerciſe of his own powers? No; "by faith he "offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than "Cain, by which he obtained witneſs that he "was righteous [y]." Now, as "faith is not of "ourſelves, but is the gift of God;" this clearly ſhews

x Gen. vi. 5. 12. comp.

y Heb. xi. 4.

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ſhews that righteouſneſs was not more natural to Abel than to his brother, but given him from above.

Such is the *univerſality* of this corruption, that we muſt neceſſarily conclude that it is born with us. Were not man naturally corrupt, it is inconceivable that in the courſe of only nine generations from Adam, corruption ſhould be ſo univerſal, that only one man ſhould be found righteous in the whole world; and ſo great, as to exhauſt the long-ſuffering of the God of mercy; eſpecially when we conſider the longevity of the patriarchs; the conſequent opportunity afforded to their poſterity of being inſtructed with reſpect to the creation, the fall, and the revelation of grace; and the appearance of at leaſt one illuſtrious prophet during this period. There might be ſome ground to plead the influence of example, did only the children of the wicked follow their ways. But we learn from Scripture, what is confirmed by obſervation in every age, that even the children of the moſt pious parents, who have been ſtrictly educated in the ways of God, and as far as poſſible preſerved from the company of the wicked, diſcover the ſame corrupt inclinations with others. I ſhall not mention the ungodly and undutiful Ham, leſt it ſhould be ſaid that he was tainted by the wickedneſs of the antediluvian world. Did not Abraham receive this ſignal teſtimony from God himſelf? "I know him, that "he will command his children and his houſe-"hold after him; and they ſhall keep," or "that "they

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"they may keep the way of the LORD [z]." Was not Abraham ſeparated from the world around him, ſeparated from his own kindred? Yet there was an Iſhmael in his family, a ſcoffer, a perſecutor [a]. Was not Iſaac the father of that "profane "perſon Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold "his birthright [b]!" So wicked were ſome of the ſons of Jacob, that they "troubled him, to make "him to ſtink among the inhabitants of the "land [c]." Two of them were guilty of inceſt [d]; two of them were perfidious murderers; and they almoſt all conſpired againſt Joſeph, and ſold him as a ſlave.

II. It is evident that this depravity is natural to man, becauſe it is aſcribed to him, and actually appears in his conduct, from his *earlieſt years*. Here we might appeal to univerſal experience. Where is the parent, who, unleſs wonderfully blinded by ſelf-love or prejudice, has not remarked in his children the mournful dawnings of peeviſhneſs, wilfulneſs, diſobedience, envy and reſentment, almoſt from the womb? Who has not ſeen, that falſehood is their natural language, as ſoon as they begin to ſpeak? But we appeal to the obſervation of that Witneſs who cannot err. It is his teſtimony, that "the imagination of "man's heart is evil *from his youth*," or "in-"fancy [e]." It is not ſaid that man's ways are evil, but the aſſertion reſpects his heart. Nor is it ſimply declared that his heart is evil; but this depravity

z Gen. xviii. 19. a Gen. xxi. 9.; Gal. iv. 29. b Heb. xii. 16.
c Gen. xxxiv. 30. d Gen. xxxv. 22.; xxxviii. 18. e Gen. viii. 21.

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depravity is aſcribed to the imagination of his heart; that is, to the very firſt figment of thought there. For in us, that is, "in our fleſh," in our nature as children of Adam, "dwelleth no good "thing;" and we are not "ſufficient of ourſelves "to think any thing as of ourſelves [f]." This corruption is not confined to years of maturity. Man is thus depraved from his very infancy. For the original word, as it is ſometimes rendered childhood [g], properly denotes the whole age of man from his conception, till he arrive at the ſtate of manhood. It is a derivative from the word which is uſed to ſignify a mere infant, and even an embryo in the womb [h].

Do we read of ſome, who in their early years have manifeſted a different propenſity? We are at the ſame time aſſured that this was entirely the effect of divine grace. Thus John the Baptiſt was "filled with the Holy Ghoſt, even from his "mother's womb [i]."

III. Original depravity is evidently aſcribed to that *Patriarch*, who was to be the progenitor of the Meſſiah, as well as of the Church. It has been often obſerved, that the language employed by the Spirit of God, concerning the generation of Seth, deſerves particular attention. "Adam "—begat a ſon in his own likeneſs, after his "image; and called his name Seth." He muſt be wilfully blind, who, in this phraſeology, obſerves not an obvious reference to the language uſed

f Rom. vii. 18.; 2 Cor. iii. 5.
g 1 Sam. xii. 2.
h Exod. ii. 6.; Judg. xiii. 7.
i Luke i. 15.

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uſed with reſpect to the creation of Adam, and at the ſame time a ſtriking antitheſis. "God ſaid, "Let us make man in our image, after our like-"neſs [k]." But leſt the reader ſhould overlook the contraſt, becauſe of the paſſage referred to being at ſome little diſtance in the hiſtory, the ſame language is repeated immediately before this declaration with reſpect to Seth: "In the "day that God created man, *in the likeneſs of God* "made he him.—And Adam lived an hundred "and thirty years, and begat a ſon in *his own* "likeneſs, after *his* image [l]." A very important difference is undoubtedly marked between the likeneſs of God and that of Adam. The likeneſs of Adam was that of a fallen mortal creature. Adam was now a believer, but he was a ſinful man. The image of God, which he had loſt by the fall, was indeed partially reſtored. But this was not properly *his* image: and as it was reſtored only by grace, it could not be communicated according to the courſe of nature. Adam could beget no ſon in his likeneſs, even as partially renewed. For moral rectitude can only be the effect of a new creation: and we are thus created, not in the firſt, but in the ſecond Adam [m]. Although it had been poſſible, that our firſt parent could have communicated his image as a renewed man, ſtill there would have been a communication of his remaining corruption; and Seth would have inherited original ſin.

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k Gen. i. 26. l Gen. v. 1. 3. m Eph. ii. 10; Col. iii. 10.

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The language of the Spirit of God, in this paſſage, forms ſo remarkable an antitheſis to that employed concerning the creation of Adam, that the mind inſtantaneouſly and irreſiſtibly recurs to it: and how repugnant ſoever to the pride of the heart, feels a ſecret conviction that this means ſomething very different from being "created in "God's image, after his likeneſs."

This account is not given with reſpect to Cain, although there can be no doubt that it is equally applicable to him. But ſome might have indulged the vain imagination, that, when Cain received exiſtence, ſin retained more of its virulence in our firſt parents, than afterwards. Or, it might have been ſuppoſed, that this was peculiar to Cain, of whom it is ſaid that he "was of that "wicked one;" and that although ſimilar depravity had been communicated to his poſterity, this had periſhed with them in the univerſal deluge. Nor is this ſaid of Abel, who, as far as appears, left no iſſue. But this account is reſerved for the hiſtory of that other ſeed, whom God appointed inſtead of righteous Abel. As, after the deluge, the earth was to be peopled ſolely by the deſcendants of Seth; as the ſeed of the Church, nay, that ſeed, in which all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed, was to ſpring from him; we are taught, by the Spirit of inſpiration, what judgment we ought to form with reſpect to the natural ſtate of mankind in general, and even of thoſe who are the heirs of glory.

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IV. The very *names* of ſome of the patriarchs convey this important leſſon. Among the Hebrews and other eaſtern nations, the names impoſed on perſons, either at their birth or afterwards, were always ſignificant. They were monuments, of the moſt ſimple and familiar kind. They either denoted ſomething ſingular in regard to their birth, or reſpected ſome bleſſing from God. Thus they were a ſort of compendious hiſtory. For we muſt ſuppoſe, that parents were at pains to explain them to their children; and they could not be pronounced, without the recollection of the reaſon of their being impoſed [n].

But moſt of the names given by the antediluvian patriarchs are confined to one affecting ſubject. They expreſs the guilt and miſery of our nature; as if theſe good men had ſtill looked back to the entrance of ſin, and kept in their eye its deſerved puniſhment. The name of *Abel*, as it ſignifies *vanity*, or "a vapour that ſoon vaniſh-"eth away," emphatically denoted, not merely the brevity of his life, but that of the life of man in general, who "at his beſt ſtate is altogether "vanity." Seth, the ſubſtitute for Abel, gave a name to his ſon, which exhibits man in the ſame melancholy point of view. "He called his name "*Enos*." This ſignifies *ſorrowful, grievouſly ſick, miſerable*. Nor was this name confined to him. Like that of *Abel*, it is extended to all men; who are often called *Enos*, or *ſons of Enos*, be-

cauſe

[n] Fleury, Mœurs des Iſraelites, Chap. i.

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cauſe of their ſpiritual ſickneſs, their ſorrow and miſery. Hence the Pſalmiſt prays, with reſpect to the enemies and perſecutors of the Church; "Put them in fear, O LORD, that the nations may "know themſelves to be *Enos*, miſerable men[o]." Enos ſeems to have recollected the meaning of his own name, when he gave one to his ſon *Cainan*; for this may be rendered *mourning* or *lamentation*. The grandſon of Cainan was called *Jared*; which may be tranſlated *deſcending*, and has been underſtood as referring to the *deſcent* of the ſons of God from that ſtate of ſeparation from the poſterity of Cain, in which they had hitherto continued[p]. In different places of Scripture, the ſame word denotes the effects of ſin;—as in Jer. xlviii. 18. "*Come down* from thy glory:" Lam. i. 9. "She remembereth not her laſt end; "therefore ſhe *came down* wonderfully." The name *Methuſelah* has been rendered by ſome, "He dies, "and it is ſent;" by others, "He dies, and the "dart cometh." According to either tranſlation, the name is viewed as having a prophetical reference to the deluge, which was *ſent* that very year in which this good man *died*. Enoch, we know, was a prophet; and it would appear that in giving a name to his ſon, he foretold the flood nearly a thouſand years before it came. Methuſelah called his ſon *Lamech*, that is, *poor*, *made low*, or *one who is ſtruck*.

o Pſal. ix. 20. See Ainſw. on Gen. iv. 26.

p Heidegger. Hiſtor. Sac. Vol. i. Ex. vi. ſ. 32.

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v. The corruption of our narure appears from the dominion which *death* hath exercifed over *children.* The apoftle Paul, in proving the exiftence of a law previous to that given from Mount Sinai, and the condemnation of men by this law, obferves, "that death reigned from Adam to Mo-"fes, even over them that had not finned after "the fimilitude of Adam's tranfgreffion [q];" that is, over children, who had never finned in their own perfons. That death indeed reigned over thefe, or exercifed its full power on them, is evident from the Scripture-hiftory. Vaft multitudes of children muft have perifhed in the deluge. The deftruction of the cities of the plain extended to perfons of every age. Many thoufands, who had never actually finned, muft have fuffered in the plague of the firft-born. The command of God, with refpect to the extermination of the Amalekites, and other devoted nations, included children as well as adults. But, to ufe the language of Abraham, when interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, as God "will not deftroy the "righteous with the wicked," we may be aflured that the children, over whom death was permitted to reign, were not viewed by him as *righteous.* "Who ever perifhed, being innocent?" They "had not finned after the fimilitude of Adam's "tranfgreffion." They could be viewed as guilty, therefore, only as having finned in that common parent, who, as a public repreferitative, "is "the figure of him that is to come [r]."

To

q Rom. v. 14. r Rom. v. 12. 14. comp.

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To pretend that the death of infants is to be conſidered as a mercy rather than a judgment, as taking them away from the evils of this life; is to beg the queſtion in a very ridiculous manner, by ſuppoſing that they indiſcriminately make a change to the better, or, in other words, that they muſt of neceſſity be free from future puniſhment, as being free from ſin. This aſſertion alſo flatly denies the veracity of God in the threatening and ſentence of the law: for it repreſents that as a bleſſing, which he denounces as a curſe. It is equally repugnant to all the feelings of our nature. For we ſtill view death as in itſelf, not a benefit, but a calamity. However great the ſufferings of life, it is a very rare caſe, if men do not recoil from death with horror: and for reconciling the mind to it, all the conſolations of religion are requiſite.

VI. The Scripture-hiſtory includes a variety of circumſtances which evidently allude to the *manner* in which ſin is tranſmitted. The firſt dictate of ſhame, as felt by the parents of our race, in conſequence of the entrance of ſin, was to conceal thoſe parts which are the inſtruments of generation. All the members of the body are employed as the inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs; but ſhame is eſpecially excited by the nakedneſs of theſe; as if God would ſet a ſpecial mark of diſhonour on them, to remind us that in this way ſin, the parent of ſhame, is tranſmitted from one generation to another; and that the human race

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is continued, and ſin communicated, by the very ſame means.

The ordinance of circumciſion had a ſimilar reference. Being a painful rite, it intimated that ſin merits ſuffering, and that man is ſubjected to this by the ſentence of his Judge. Was this rite performed in the way of exciſion? It ſignified that the whole man deſerves to be cut off from the fellowſhip of God. From the language frequently uſed in Scripture, it is evident that this ceremony denoted that the heart is depraved and polluted by ſin. Therefore we read of the uncircumciſion of the heart, and of its being neceſſary that this ſhould be circumciſed by divine grace[s]. As it was a ſeal of the covenant of grace, and of "the righteouſneſs which is by "faith;" it reſpected man's condemnation by the firſt covenant, and proclaimed his need of juſtification and ſalvation by another. It was to be performed on the eighth day, that is, as ſoon as the child could be ſuppoſed able to bear it without danger, or be cleanſed; to declare that man is corrupted, that he is ſubjected to ſuffering, that his heart is depraved, and that he needs to be regenerated and juſtified, even from the womb.

The hereditary curſe to which woman is ſubjected, is a ſtriking indication of the manner in which ſin is tranſmitted. "Unto the woman "God ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow "and thy conception," that is, "thy ſorrow in "conception; in ſorrow thou ſhalt bring forth "children."

[s] Lev. xxvi. 41.; Jer. ix. 26.; Deut. x. 16.; xxx. 6.

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"children †." Had this ſentence been confined to Eve herſelf, it might have been viewed as merely the puniſhment of her perſonal guilt. But it is entailed on her daughters. It ſubſiſts in its full force, although it is nearly ſix thouſand years ſince it was pronounced. Individuals, indeed, in almoſt every region, from ſome peculiarity of frame, and even the females in general belonging to ſome nations, feel the effect of the latter part of this ſentence in a very inferior degree, having little pain in child-bearing. But this no more forms an objection to the general law, than does the great fertility of ſome parts of the earth to the curſe pronounced on it for the ſin of man. Sorrow in *conception* and *child-bearing* is the common lot of women in every age: and for what end, but to remind mankind, in their ſucceſſive generations, of the manner in which ſin entered into the world; to teach them alſo that they were "*conceived* in ſin," and that it is impoſſible that "he who is *born* of a "woman ſhould be righteous?" This hereditary ſorrow, which is the native fruit of ſin, proclaims to the woman, every time ſhe conceives or bears a child, that ſhe "travaileth with ini-"quity, hath conceived miſchief, and brings forth "falſehood."

It alſo deſerves notice, that ſorrow in theſe reſpects is confined to our nature. It is unknown to all other animals, in any ſimilar degree, except in peculiar caſes, or as proceeding from ſome

 accidental

† Gen. iii. 16.

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accidental cauſe: and ſuch occaſional diverſities cannot enter into the deſcription of the ſpecies in general.

I may add, that the atonement enjoined under the law for every woman "who had conceived "ſeed, and born a child," conveys the ſame inſtruction. She was not only to continue in a ſtate of purification forty days, for a male-child, and eighty for a female; but it was neceſſary that, when the time appointed was elapſed, ſhe ſhould "bring an offering, and that the prieſt ſhould "make an atonement for her [u]."

VII. The *miraculous conception* of our Saviour affords a ſtrong argument in ſupport of the doctrine under conſideration. It was promiſed that he ſhould be the *ſeed* of the *woman* [v]. For had he deſcended from Adam in the way of ordinary generation, he muſt alſo have ſinned and died in him; and thus he could never have bruiſed the head of the ſerpent. The Meſſiah, indeed, could not himſelf be ſubjected to death by means of the firſt Adam; and yet by dying procure life, as the ſecond. As this great promiſe was made immediately after the entrance of ſin, and juſt before the denunciation of the ſentence on the woman, as to ſorrow in conception; with reſpect to the time and the connexion, merits our attention, that God proclaimed deliverance from ſin by means of a deviation from the ordinary law which he had eſtabliſhed for the propagation of our ſpecies. The curſe, written in conception, and tranſmitted by means of it, was to be removed

[u] Lev. xii. 1.—8. [v] Gen. iii. 15.

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ved by a conception of ſo extraordinary a nature, that "a woman ſhould compaſs a man[w]."

This "new thing in the earth" took place, when the Virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt. That the Meſſiah might have a right to redeem us, it was neceſſary that he ſhould be our near kinſman. He muſt be of the ſame ſtock with ourſelves, that he might "not "be aſhamed to call us brethren," and that his obedience and ſuffering might be imputed to ſinners of the ſame family. As this was requiſite from his character as a Redeemer; it was equally ſo, from the greatneſs of that humiliation which was neceſſary for our redemption. He muſt "be-"come in all things like unto us," as far as this conformity was attainable "without ſin." When, therefore, he aſſumed our nature, without the intervention of man; we may be aſſured that the only reaſon of this difference was, that he could not otherwiſe aſſume it without being ſubjected to ſin. While the word was really "made fleſh," he was made only "in the likeneſs of *ſinful* "fleſh." Accordingly, we are expreſsly informed, that this ſeed of the woman, this "holy "thing," is called "the Son of God," in conſequence of the "Power of the Higheſt overſha-"dowing" the Virgin[x].

What reaſon have we for the deepeſt humiliation, when we contemplate our natural ſtate! Well may we cry out with the leper under the law,

[w] Jer. xxxi. 22. [x] Luke i. 35.

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law, " Unclean, unclean !" Let us imitate the exercise of David, in his penitential Psalm, in tracing up our actual transgressions to the corrupt and bitter fountain of original sin. Let us compare our own deformity with that purity which the law requires, and in which we were created in our first father; and this will be our language to the Searcher of hearts: " Behold ! thou de-" sirest truth in the inward parts;" but " I was " shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother " conceive me." How ill does pride become a fallen, a polluted worm! especially in relation to infinite holiness! Well may " our mouth be stop-" ped," in the presence of that God, in whose sight " the heavens are not clean."

Let us beware of accusing divine justice, in entrusting our holiness and felicity in the hand of one person. Let us rather admire his mercy, in providing a remedy. Let us remember that God hath eternally displayed and vindicated the justice of his procedure in the old covenant, by the plan he pursues in the new: and that if we obstinately deny his justice in the imputation of sin, we disclaim any interest in the imputation of righteousness. We cannot renounce our interest in the first Adam, as a representative, without at the same time renouncing all claim to the second. For " *as* by one man's disobedience many were " made sinners; *so* by the obedience of one shall " many be made righteous."

SECT.

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SECTION XI.

The Incarnation of the Son of God.—His frequent Appearance in the likeneſs of Man, a prelude of this.—Prefigured by the Smoking Furnace and Burning Lamp;—the Burning Buſh;—Jacob's Ladder;—the Cloud of Glory.—Reſpected in the Rights of Primogeniture;—Law of the Levirate;—Circumciſion;—Patriarchal Mode of Swearing;—Abſtinence from the Sinew that ſhrank.

JESUS CHRIST is the great ſubject of the Holy Scriptures. "The ſpirit of prophecy is the teſ-"timony of Jeſus." The myſtery of the incarnation of a divine perſon is "without contro-"verſy great." On this myſtery, reſts the whole doctrine, revealed in the word of God, concerning our ſalvation. We need not wonder then, that, while this is the ſubject of ſo many prophecies and promiſes, it ſhould alſo have been exhibited to the faith of the Church, by various ſymbols and preludes; or that it was taught not merely in a doctrinal way, but by hiſtorical illuſtration.

Before

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Before entering on the conſideration of what is chiefly in view, it may be neceſſary to obſerve, that the foundation of the Church's faith, as to the incarnation of a divine perſon, lay in the firſt promiſe. In this it was declared, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. The perſon, whoſe appearance is here foretold, being called the *ſeed* of the *woman*; faith, in embracing the promiſe, muſt have viewed him as truly *man*. But ſuch is the nature of the work aſcribed to him, that there was an equal neceſſity for conſidering him as *God*. The old ſerpent had already ſhewn, that man could not enter the liſts with him. He had deceived, and been the inſtrument of deſtroying our nature; although he found it in a ſtate f innocency. Now, when it is ſaid, "It ſhall bruiſe thy head," the meaning is, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould retort on himſelf the fatal ſtroke given by this deſtroyer; that he ſhould overthrow that external dominion in the world, which he had acquired in conſequence of the fall; nay, that he ſhould ſubdue his power in the heart of man, by the deſtruction of ſin, which, as it is the offſpring of the ſerpent, is the great ſupport of his kingdom. Could faith ever expect the accompliſhment of ſuch a work by any mere creature?

If any doubt had remained as to this being the meaning of the firſt promiſe, it muſt have been fully removed by the prediction of Enoch, the ſeventh from Adam, who expreſsly declared who it was that ſhould come and "deſtroy the works "of

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" of the devil." For he " propheſied, ſaying, Be-
" hold the Lord cometh [y]:" and this prophecy is by no means to be confined to Chriſt's ſecond coming, although it ſhall have its full and final completion in this great event.

It has been ſuppoſed by many learned writers, that our firſt parents, after being turned to God, were ſo big with expectation of a divine deliver-er, that Eve miſtook Cain for him. Therefore they thus render the words that ſhe uttered, on the birth of her firſt-born; " I have gotten a " man the Lord [z]."

With reſpect to the preludes of the incarnation of the eternal Word, the following things may be obſerved.

1. This glorious Perſon frequently appeared in the *likeneſs* of *human nature*. His appearance, as the Angel of the LORD, or the Angel-JEHOVAH, we have already conſidered, as an evidence that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed under the Old Teſtament. But here it demands our attention, that when he revealed himſelf in this character, he often aſſumed the likeneſs of man; and made himſelf known by ſuch language, or ſuch acts, as clearly expreſſed the work that he was to perform, as " the Word made fleſh," and reſpected his various functions, as the Prophet, Prieſt, and King of his Church. When the LORD, attended by two of his miniſtering ſpirits, appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, they

[y] Jude, ver. 14. [z] Gen. iv. 1.

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they ſeemed to be all clothed with humanity. Hence Abraham took them for three ordinary travellers; and made the ſame preparations for them, that he was wont to do, when exerciſing hoſpitality [a]. It was only by the language of one of theſe celeſtial viſitors, particularly as foretelling the birth of the promiſed ſeed, and by the diſcovery he made of his heart-ſearching power in rebuking Sarah for her ſecret ridicule, that Abraham was undeceived [b]. But during the whole of the interview, this divine perſon retained the ſame likeneſs; and when he aroſe to depart, was brought on his way by Abraham, as a man is accompanied by his friend.

In the ſame manner did he appear unto Jacob, when he was preparing to meet with his incenſed brother Eſau. The patriarch "was left alone; "and there wreſtled a man with him until the "breaking of the day [c]." This expreſſion, "he "was left alone," eſpecially as connected with what is previouſly mentioned concerning his ſending all his family "over the brook," is plainly meant to inform us, that he, who wreſtled with him, was not one of the ſons of men. On this occaſion, the Son of God not only aſſumed the likeneſs of our nature, ſo that he might be *ſeen*; but condeſcended to aſſume ſo near a reſemblance of its reality, that he might be *felt*. What a wonderful prelude of that grace which was afterwards to be manifeſted, when the eyes of the diſciples ſhould

a Gen. xviii. b Ver. 10. 13.—15. c Gen. xxxii. 24.

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ſhould not only ſee, but handle the ſelf-ſame Word of life [d]!

Jacob knew that he had wreſtled with God; for the thing for which he wreſtled was the bleſſing, which no creature could confer. As the appearance of God in the likeneſs of man, eſpecially as he made himſelf known both to the ſight and to the touch, was a ſtriking prelude of the incarnation; the teſtimony given to Jacob, as to his ſucceſs, included no inconſiderable intimation with reſpect to the union of the divine and human nature in one perſon. The Angel ſaid to him: "As "a prince haſt thou power with God, and with "men, and haſt prevailed." The word *men* is in the plural, indeed; as implying an aſſurance of protection wherever he ſhould go, and particularly of his having power over his enraged brother. But what was the pledge of this? His prevalence in this aſtoniſhing interview, when he "had "power," even in the way of bodily wreſtling, "over the angel" who appeared in the form of *man;* becauſe "he had power with" him as "*God*," by his faith and importunity, his tears and ſupplications [e].

To inform Jacob, and the Church in ſucceeding ages, that the condeſcenſion of the Son, in aſſuming our nature, ſhould nowiſe impair or derogate from his eſſential majeſty and power; this divine wreſtler, during the ſtruggle, touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, ſo that it was out of joint. This is underſtood of the ſocket in which the

[d] 1 John i. 1. [e] Hoſ. xii. 4.

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the ball of the thigh-bone moves: and it has been obſerved, that ſuch is the ſituation of this place, that Jacob muſt have been aſſured no mere man could have ſo *touched* it in wreſtling, as to have effected a diſlocation.

In the ſame form did he appear unto Joſhua, while he blockaded Jericho. "There ſtood a "man over againſt him, with his ſword drawn in "his hand," who ſaid to him, "As prince of the "hoſt of JEHOVAH am I now come." From this teſtimony Joſhua muſt have known, that this was he who had been promiſed as God's Angel, who ſhould go before Iſrael, and deliver their enemies into their hands [f]. By the form he aſſumed, it was alſo declared to Joſhua, and by him to the Church, that this Angel ſhould afterwards "par-"take of fleſh and blood." This appearance, indeed, was not merely a prelude of his incarnation in general. It "teſtified beforehand," that he ſhould be manifeſted in human nature, as Immanuel, as God with us, "for us," and not "for "our adverſaries [g]," as the King and Lord of the Church; that in this nature he ſhould conquer the ſerpent and his ſeed, and exerciſe abſolute dominion over all the enemies of his true Iſrael. For he ſaid to Joſhua, "See, *I* have given into "thine hand Jericho." It was alſo declared, that He who ſhould come in our nature, ſhould, even as incarnate, be the object of religious adoration. For, as if the homage given by Joſhua, in falling on his face to the earth, and worſhipping, had been

[f] Exod. xxiii. 23. [g] Joſh. v. 13.

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been too little; this *man* ſaid to him, "Looſe thy "ſhoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon "thou ſtandeſt is holy [h]."

That JEHOVAH appeared in the likeneſs of man to Gideon, is evident from the fear that ſeized him, when, by the miraculous conſumption of his ſacrifice, he perceived that this was a heavenly viſitant [i]. That he made a ſimilar appearance to the wife of Manoah, is no leſs clear from the account ſhe gave to her huſband of the viſit ſhe had received; from the prayer afterwards preſented by Manoah; as well as from the queſtions he put to the Angel, and the amazement of both when they diſcovered that this was a viſion of God [k]. They at firſt conſidered him only as "a man of "God," or a prophet. By both theſe apparitions, the divine Word taught the Church, that he ſhould at length actually appear as her great High-prieſt. When he conſumed the ſacrifice of Gideon, by cauſing fire to riſe out of the rock, he ſymbolically ſignified, that he ſhould appear both as her prieſt and ſacrifice; as her prieſt, preſenting an offering acceptable to God through the fire of his own Spirit; as a ſacrifice for expiating all her guilt, as he ſhould himſelf be burnt in the ſufferings of his human nature, by the fire of divine wrath. His aſcending in the flame of the altar, when Manoah had preſented a burnt-offering, might intimate that, as "the High-prieſt of "our profeſſion," he would aſcend to heaven, and

h Joſh. v. 13.—15.; vi. 1, 2.

i Judges vi. 22.

k Judges xiii. 6. 8. 11. 17. 21, 22.

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enter into the holieſt of all, through the merit of his own oblation.

When Moſes deſired to ſee the glory of God, he ſaid to him, "Thou ſhalt ſee my back-parts[l]." Hence it is moſt probable that he ſaw the likeneſs of human nature; as an anticipation of that bleſſed diſcovery which was afterwards made to him on the mount of transfiguration. It has been ſuppoſed, indeed, with great probability, that in this manner God ordinarily communicated his will to Moſes; as it is ſaid that he ſpake with him "face "to face, as a man ſpeaketh unto his friend[m]."

By ſimilar manifeſtations did the Lord comfort his Church, while ſhe was in Babylon, and while ſhe continued in a low ſtate after her return from captivity. Ezekiel, by the river Chebar, ſaw the likeneſs of a glorious throne; and "upon the like-"neſs of the throne was the likeneſs as the appear-"ance of a man above upon it[n]." No manifeſtation could tend more to comfort the ſouls of believers, in their afflicted ſtate in a ſtrange land, than ſuch a prelude of the future incarnation of their God, and of the glorious majeſty of his kingdom. After the return of the captives, when they were ſo weak as to be threatened with deſtruction from their enemies, Zechariah was favoured with a viſion of Chriſt, as "a man—ſtanding among the "myrtle-trees that were in the bottom. Behind "him were there red horſes ſpeckled and white[o]." While this viſion repreſented the low and mournful ſtate of the Church, it expreſſed her ſafety, from

l Exod. xxxiii. 23. m Ver. 11. n Ezek. i. 26. o Zech. i. 8.

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from the preſence of Chriſt in the midſt of her, as the Lord of all the angels of heaven, whom he employs as his miniſters to fulfil his pleaſure in the kingdom of providence, in ſubſerviency to the intereſts of his ſpiritual kingdom. Many ſimilar viſions had this prophet. Particularly, the Angel who appeared to him as a man, expreſsly foretold his own miſſion to dwell as the LORD of hoſts in the midſt of his Church [p].

The very character of an *Angel* or *Meſſenger*, under which the Son appeared to the patriarchs, and to the Church under the Old Teſtament, while it declared that he was then ſent by the Father, had a ſpecial reference to his future miſſion in our nature, as "the Angel of the Cove-"nant, who ſhould come to his temple [q]." The many appearances, which he made in the likeneſs of man, if not meant as preludes of his actual incarnation, and for confirming the faith of the Church in this moſt important article, could have no other tendency than to lead her aſtray to idolatry. Theſe appearances, ſo far from confirming her faith in that revelation given to her, muſt have directly fruſtrated one great end of it, which was to preſerve the doctrines of the divine unity and ſpirituality; and muſt have proved a ſnare, inducing her to "change the glory of the uncor-"ruptible God into an image made like to cor-"ruptible man [r]." But when ſhe knew that theſe were the manifeſtations of one divine perſon, ſolely in relation to a future incarnation for the re-

p Zech. ii. 8.—11. q Mal. iii. 1. r Rom. i. 23.

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demption of loſt man; ſhe was guarded againſt the folly of ſuppoſing that God had a human form, or that his pure eſſence had any affinity to groſs matter.

11. The viſion that Abraham had of a *furnace* and *lamp*, when God entered into covenant with him, may be viewed as a prelude of the incarnation. After he had, according to the divine command, divided the various parts of the ſacrifice, and "laid each piece one againſt another;" when it was dark, he ſaw a ſmoking furnace and a burning lamp paſs between the pieces [s]. Theſe have been generally viewed as ſymbols of the affliction of the poſterity of Abraham in Egypt, and of their deliverance; eſpecially as we are informed in the context, that God foretold both the ſufferings and the redemption of Iſrael, and that day entered into covenant with Abraham. Others have underſtood the *ſmoking furnace* as an emblem of the ſufferings of Chriſt's human nature, under the wrath of God as a Judge; and the *burning lamp*, of his divine to which it is united, in conſequence of which union it was impoſſible that he could ſuccumb under his ſufferings; or of the glory that followed [t].

It is evident that the ſacrifice prefigured that of Chriſt. The covenant made with Abraham, in as far as it reſpected ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, was only a revelation of that covenant which had been made from eternity with Him who

[s] Gen. xv. 10. 17. [t] See Edward's Hiſt. Redemption, p. 52.

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who was promiſed as the ſeed of Abraham; and in this point of view, it derived all its confirmation from the death of the great Sacrifice.

But can there be any thing improper in viewing theſe ſymbols, as referring both to the natural ſeed of Abraham, and to that *one* ſeed, "which "is Chriſt[u];" to the former primarily, to the latter ultimately? We know that Chriſt is the antitypical Iſrael; and that what is ſpoken by one of the prophets; "Out of Egypt have I call-"ed my Son[v]," is by an evangeliſt underſtood as referring to the Saviour. We cannot ſo well perceive the propriety of this application, without ſuppoſing ſuch a double reference. There are other paſſages of Scripture, which can ſcarcely be otherwiſe interpreted; as the language of the Church in the book of Pſalms, which ſeems to include the ſufferings both of the type and of the antitype: "Many a time have they afflicted me from "my youth, may Iſrael now ſay;—yet they have "not prevailed againſt me. The plowers plow-"ed upon my back; they made long their fur-"rows[w]." The laſt words undoubtedly allude to Chriſt's "giving his back to the ſmiters," and to the deep inciſions made by the ſcourge.

III. The *burning buſh* may be viewed as a ſimilar emblem. It has, indeed, been generally underſtood as ſhadowing forth the afflictions of Iſrael in Egypt, and at the ſame time her preſervation by reaſon of the divine preſence. With

u Gal. iii. 16. v Hoſ. xi. 1.; Mat. ii. 15. w Pſal. cxxix. 1.—3.

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fully as much propriety may it be viewed as denoting the ſufferings of the Meſſiah. "The An-
"gel of the LORD appeared unto him (Moſes) in
"a flame of fire, out of the midſt of a buſh: and
"he looked, and behold, the buſh burned with
"fire, and the buſh was not conſumed. And
"Moſes ſaid, I will now turn aſide, and ſee this
"great ſight, why the buſh is not burned [x]." He, who appeared, was the Angel of the LORD, who had often before manifeſted himſelf in the likeneſs of man. The *buſh* or *bramble*, as the word ſignifies, was a fit emblem of his humanity, which is repreſented "as a root ſpringing out of a dry ground." "The flame of fire" denotes the wrath of God, which burned, but did not conſume his human nature. The reaſon why this could not be conſumed, was the inhabitation of the Angel-JEHOVAH. This was indeed "a great ſight;" for there was "no ſorrow like unto his ſorrow, where-
"with the LORD afflicted him in the day of his
"fierce anger [y]."

IV. The *ladder*, which Jacob ſaw in a dream, was a ſtriking ſymbol of the incarnation. "Be-
"hold, a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top
"of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels
"of God aſcending and deſcending on it. And,
"behold, the LORD ſtood above it, and ſaid, I am
"the LORD God of Abraham thy father [z]." Our Lord muſt himſelf be the beſt interpreter of this viſion; and he explains it to Nathanael in theſe words,

[x] Exod. iii. 2, 3. [y] Lam. i. 12. [z] Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.

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words, "Hereafter ye ſhall ſee heaven open, and "the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on "the Son of man [a]." Heaven was *ſhut* againſt man by his ſin. There could be no comfortable intercourſe between earth and that better country. But through Chriſt as Mediator, it is *open*. In his human nature he is as a ladder "ſet upon "the earth;" in his divine, he "reaches to hea-"ven;" by his work as God-man, he unites both. As JEHOVAH "ſtood above it;" this denotes that God, as judge, is reconciled to man, and admits him through Chriſt to the moſt intimate fellowſhip. The angels of God aſcend and deſcend on this ladder. This ſignifies, that all things in heaven and earth are recapitulated in Chriſt; that men are admitted to fellowſhip with angels; and that theſe bleſſed ſpirits are conſtantly employed in miniſtering to the Mediator, in ſubſerviency to the intereſts of his kingdom, and to the ſaints through him. Inſtead of "aſcend-"ing and deſcending *on*," ſome incline to read, "*to* the Son of man [b]." But it is evident that the evangeliſt uſes the particle επι, the ſame which occurs in the Septuagint *, in reference to the uſe of a ladder; and if rendered *to*, the force of the alluſion would be loſt.

a John i. 51. b Vid. Lampe in John i. 51.

* One would almoſt think that John, in narrating the language of his Maſter, had expreſſed himſelf in conformity to this verſion, which was then commonly uſed by his countrymen. Οι αγγελοι του Θεου ανεβαινον και καταβαινον επ' αυτω. Gen. xxviii. 12. Τους αγγελους του Θεου ανεβαινοντας και καταβαινοντας επι τον Υιον του ανθρωπου. John i. 51.

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v. This was alſo prefigured by the *cloud* of *glory*, or the *glory* of the *LORD*, which dwelt in the tabernacle and temple. When the Iſraelites departed from Egypt, "the LORD went before "them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them "the way; and by night, in a pillar of fire, to "give them light [c]." He, who thus went before them, was Chriſt; for he is afterwards called "the Angel of God [d]." After the erection of the tabernacle, "the cloud abode thereon, and the "glory of the LORD filled" it [e]. This was a lively emblem of the incarnation of the Word, to whom this expreſſion, "the glory of the LORD," ſeems to be appropriated, as a perſonal deſignation [f]. As the cloud *abode* on the tabernacle, and the glory filled it, in this ſenſe God was ſaid to *dwell among* the children of Iſrael [g]. The type received its completion, when "the Word," who is "the brightneſs of glory," "was made fleſh, "and *dwelt among*" men "as in a tabernacle," ſo that they "beheld his glory [h]." For the human nature of Chriſt is "the true tabernacle "which God pitched, and not man [i]." In him "dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodi-"ly." That emblematical glory, of which we ſpeak, in like manner filled the temple; and this alſo was a type of Chriſt's human nature. We therefore read of "the temple of his body [k]."

VI. The

c Exod. xiii. 21. d Exod. xiv. 19. e Exod. xl. 34.
f Iſa. xl. 5. g Exod. xxv. 8. h John i. 14.
i Heb. viii. 2. k John ii. 19. 21.

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VI. The rights of *primogeniture* had a ſpecial reſpect to the incarnation of the Meſſiah. Theſe, although confirmed by the law of Moſes, were in force long before. They had the divine ſanction from a very early period. For God ſaid to Cain, with reſpect to his younger brother Abel, "If "thou doeſt well, unto thee ſhall be his deſire, "and he ſhall rule over thee [m]." Thus they were nearly, if not abſolutely, coeval with the firſt promiſe; as to this they evidently bore a relation. One ſpecial honour, reſtricted to the firſt-born, was that he ſhould be the anceſtor of that ſeed in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. Thus the birthright was appropriated to Iſaac, concerning whom God ſaid to Abraham, "With him will I eſtabliſh my covenant;" and, "In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called [n]." On this account eſpecially, is Eſau charged with profanity, in ſelling his birthright.

As the primogeniture ſecured this peculiar honour, and was therefore a perpetual memorial of the promiſe of the Meſſiah; it was attended with ſeveral diſtinct privileges, which were all expreſſive of his character. Had the firſt-born a double portion of his father's goods? This prefigured him, who is "heir of all things." Had he dominion over his brethren? This pointed forward to him, who was promiſed as God's "firſt-"born, high above the kings of the earth," "the "firſt-born among many brethren." Did the firſt-born, as holy to the Lord, conſecrate the reſt of

[m] Gen. iv. 7. [n] Gen. xvii. 21.; xxi. 12.

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of the family? It was a prelude of the work of Chriſt in our nature, who for our ſakes conſecrated himſelf in his ſufferings, that he might "purify us as a peculiar people."

VII. The law of the *levirate* may be viewed in the ſame light. According to this law, if a man died without leaving children, his brother next in age, or the neareſt of kin, was bound to marry the widow of the deceaſed, and raiſe up a ſucceſſor to him. The firſt-born of this marriage was legally viewed as the deſcendant of the elder brother, who had died childleſs [o]. This ordinance was in force before the Moſaic diſpenſation, as appears from the hiſtory of Judah's family [p]: and ſome carry it back to the days of Shem, or even of Adam. It was undoubtedly enjoined by divine revelation; and afterwards incorporated into the law given by Moſes [q]. While there was a political reaſon for this ordinance, that inheritances might be preſerved in the different families to which they belonged, there can be no ground to doubt that there was a far higher one. The honour of the firſt-born was thus ſingularly guarded, that in their ſucceſſive generations the Iſraelites might direct their eye to Him who, as "the firſt-born of every creature," muſt "in all "things have the pre-eminence [r]." In every other caſe, ſuch a connexion was expreſsly prohibited [s]. When, therefore, there was a poſitive law,

o Deut. xxv. 6. p Gen. xxxviii. 7, 8. &c. q Deut. xxv. 5.—10.
r Col. i. 15. 18. s Lev. xviii. 16.; xx. 21.

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law, expreſsly diſpenſing with another in certain circumſtances; eſpecially as this diſpenſation reſpected a law evidently founded on moral principles, and meant to preſerve ſociety from ſuch mixtures as are abhorrent to nature; it could not paſs with the Iſraelites, without exciting a ſpirit of inquiry as to the myſtery it involved.

VIII. As *circumciſion* ſymbolically taught the doctrine of original ſin, it alſo reſpected the manner in which it ſhould be taken away. It had a relation to the *birth* of a Saviour, who was to appear "in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh," and be made ſin for us. It was appointed as a ſeal of the covenant made with Abraham, which eſpecially reſpected the Meſſiah who was to ſpring from him, as deſcending from Iſaac, by whom he was prefigured. As an evidence of this ſpecial relation, which the ſeal of circumciſion had to the promiſed ſeed, it is worthy of obſervation, that it was not enjoined on Abraham before the birth of Iſhmael, his ſon by the bond-woman, but at the very time of his receiving the promiſe of a ſon by Sarah: nor did he become the father of this child of promiſe, till he had ſubmitted to this rite [t].

"It was particularly in reſpect of the Meſ-
"ſiah," ſays the learned Allix, "that God would
"have that mark made upon that part of man's
"body which is inſervient to generation.—God
"could do nothing more agreeable to the idea
"the Iſraelites had of the Meſſiah, and of his
"birth,

[t] Gen. xvii. 10. 15, 16.; xviii. 10.; xxi. 1, 2.

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" birth, than to diſtinguiſh them by a relation to " this bleſſed ſeed, which he promiſed them; as " God deſigned, without all queſtion, by that " means, to oblige the Jews to remember the firſt " promiſe made to mankind; ſo no doubt, he in- " tended by it to fix their minds upon the conſi- " deration of that favour he had ſhewed to them, " as well as to Abraham, to diſtinguiſh them from " all the people of the earth, that the Deliverer " of the world might be born in their common- " wealth, and from one of their poſterity. It " was the ſame proſpect of the Meſſiah, which " made God condemn thoſe to death, who ſhould " either remain uncircumciſed themſelves, or leave " their children ſo [u]."

IX. The mode of *ſwearing* obſerved by ſome of the patriarchs, deſerves our attention here. It would appear, that the moſt ancient and moſt ordinary cuſtom was, to lift up the hand. Hence Abraham ſaid to the king of Sodom; " I have " lifted up mine hand to JEHOVAH, the moſt " high God, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth [v]." But afterwards we find the ſame patriarch obſerving a different mode. When he employed his ſteward Eliezer to take a wife to his ſon of the daughters of his own people, he ſaid to him; " Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; " and I will make thee ſwear by JEHOVAH, &c. " —And the ſervant put his hand under the thigh " of

u Reflections on the Books of Scripture, Vol. i. Part 2. chap. 15.

v Gen. xiv. 22.

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"of his maſter, and ſware to him concerning that "matter [w]." Some view this rite merely as a token of ſubjection, as being the manner in which inferiors ſwore to their ſuperiors [x]. Others, with much more probability, conſider it as having a myſtical reference. It has accordingly been interpreted, as either referring to the ſign of circumciſion, or to the promiſe of the Meſſiah. Did it immediately reſpect circumciſion? It appears, then, from what we have already ſeen, that it muſt have ultimately referred to the promiſed ſeed. It is, however, the judgment of ſome learned writers, that to this it directly referred. The Meſſiah was to come out of Abraham's *loins* or *thigh*. For, with reſpect to deſcent, theſe are uſed as ſynonymous terms. Therefore the poſterity of Jacob are called the "ſouls that came out of Ja-"cob's *thigh*," as the word literally ſignifies [y]. The ſame expreſſion is uſed as to the ſeventy ſons of Gideon [z]." It is probable, that the patriarchs ſtill continued to ſwear by the hand lifted up, in ordinary or civil matters; but that they uſed the other mode, when ſwearing in things pertaining to the covenant and promiſe. As the oath taken by the ſervant of Abraham, had this reference, becauſe he wiſhed to prevent Iſaac from mingling with the idolatrous Canaanites; the other inſtance, which we have recorded, was of the ſame kind. Jacob, when dying, took an oath of Joſeph, that he ſhould not bury him in Egypt, but with

w Gen. xxiv. 2. 9. x Hiedegger Hiſtor. Patriarch. Vol. 2. p. 135.
y Gen. xlvi. 26.; alſo Exod. i. 5. z Judg. viii. 30.

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with his fathers in the land of promiſe [a]. Now, as it is ſaid of Joſeph himſelf, that "by *faith* he "gave commandment concerning his bones [b];" we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe that the conduct of his father, in requiring an oath from him with the ſame view, proceeded from any inferior principle. From the manner in which Jacob addreſſed Joſeph, it can ſcarcely be ſuppoſed, that he aſked him to ſwear in this peculiar form in token of *inferiority*. Jacob was ſtill his father. But ſo great was the dignity of Joſeph, that Jacob ſpeaks to him as one ſoliciting a ſignal favour from his ſuperior: "If now *I have found grace in thy* "*ſight*, put, *I pray thee*, thy hand under my "thigh,—bury me not, *I pray thee*, in Egypt."

x. The cuſtom obſerved among the poſterity of Jacob, of not eating of the *ſinew* that *ſhrank*, deſerves particular notice. This cuſtom originated from the wonderful ſtruggle that their anceſtor had with the Angel-Redeemer, which we have already conſidered. "The hollow of Jacob's thigh "was out of joint, while he wreſtled with him.— "Therefore the children of Iſrael eat not of the "ſinew which ſhrank, which is upon the hollow "of the thigh, unto this day: becauſe he touch- "ed the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the ſinew "that ſhrank [c]." It has been ſuppoſed, that Jacob, by divine inſpiration, enjoined this abſtinence on his poſterity: and indeed the words may be read, "The children of Iſrael *may* not "eat

a Gen. xlvii. 29.—31. b Heb. xi. 22. c Gen. xxxii. 25. 32.

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"eat of the ſinew which ſhrank." The mention here made of this rite, if not an expreſs approbation of it, at leaſt implies no cenſure. It muſt at any rate be ſuppoſed, that there was a ſpecial providence of God overruling the obſervance of this rite, as a perpetual memorial of that unparalleled interview, and of its deſign. The children, ſeeing their fathers carefully abſtain from eating of this ſinew, would as naturally ſay, as concerning the paſſover, "What mean ye by this?" They could not but reply, that they did it in remembrance of Jacob's wreſtling with God in the appearance of man: and in as far as their knowledge or faith reached, they would explain the relation of this manifeſtation to the future appearance of the God of Jacob in human nature.

Various have been the opinions entertained, as to the reaſon of Jacob's receiving the mark of weakneſs in this part of his body. I ſhall venture a conjecture, which ſeems to ariſe from what has been already obſerved, in regard to the ſingular mode of ſwearing uſed by him, as well as by his grandfather. As the Meſſiah, the promiſed ſeed, was to ſpring from his *thigh;* might not the all-wiſe God ſet this ſignal mark of human imbecility here, ſtill to remind Jacob and his poſterity, that, although he had received the promiſe of this peculiar *bleſſing*, and a renewed confirmation of it on this occaſion, it was not his natural birthright, nor procured by his own merit or power, but wholly of grace? According to this view, it might be the will of God, that Jacob ſhould bear a mark of

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of weakneſs, as to that very point in which he was to be honoured above all other men; and have a perpetual leſſon of humility, in regard to what would be moſt apt to excite his natural pride.

This great doctrine, of the incarnation of a divine Perſon, was revealed comparatively in an obſcure manner to the patriarchs and under the law. Yet believers, who lived in theſe ages, ſaw the day of Chriſt; they ſaw it afar off, and were glad. The promiſe of the incarnation of Chriſt was the ground of their hope. This, as connected with a perſuaſion of his preſence in the Church, as that divine Perſon who ſhould at length actually aſſume human nature, was the foundation of their triumph over all the enemies who threatened her deſtruction[d]. Is not the ground of our triumph greatly enlarged? Is not the evidence of our ſecurity wonderfully confirmed? God hath been "manifeſted in the fleſh." Jeſus is known as Immanuel. Are not we, then, under ſtill ſtronger obligations to ſing; "The LORD of hoſts is *with* "*us*, the God of Jacob is our refuge?"

We have ſeen, that there were many preludes of the incarnation. Thus he, who from eternity engaged himſelf as our Surety, early manifeſted his love to the children of men. Theſe were all teſtimonies of the infinite pleaſure he had in the proſpect of his work of mediation in our world. Thus he anticipated his habitation among men. Did

d Iſa. vii. 11. 14.; viii. 9, 10.

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Did the father delight in him? He delighted in thoſe whom he was in a little to call his brethren. Was he the object of the infinite love of the Father as his eſſential image? He was equally ſo, as the Surety of loſt man. The Father loved him, becauſe he was to lay down his life. Hence he declares; "I was daily *his delights*, rejoicing al-"ways before him; rejoicing in the habitable "parts of his earth; and *my delights* were with "the ſons of men[d]." All the infinite love of the Father to him as the Surety, he as it were transferred towards thoſe for whom he had undertaken, in the actings of his love to them. What unſpeakable reaſon have we, then, to "love him "who firſt loved us!"

SECTION XII.

The Miraculous Conception illuſtrated from the Hiſtory of Melchizedek;—from various inſtances of Conception beyond the ordinary courſe of Nature;—from the Laws given to Iſrael concerning Virginity.

God did not merely foretell, and in various ways anticipate, the Incarnation of the Word: the Church was alſo informed, that he ſhould par-

d Prov. viii. 30, 31.

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take of our nature in a way different from all mere men. Beſides the prophecies concerning his being the ſeed of the woman, and being born of a virgin, there were various preludes of this wonderful event.

1. From an inſpired writer we learn, that the hiſtory of *Melchizedek* had a particular reference to the character of the Meſſiah. Being "without fa-"ther, and without mother," he was "made like "unto the Son of God[e]." This language has no reſpect to his natural birth; for in this reſpect the king of Salem was undoubtedly like other men. But it refers to the ſilence of Scripture on this head. For it was the will of God there ſhould be no account of his deſcent, that he might hiſtorically reſemble Him, who is without father as man, and without mother as God. The Apoſtle, indeed, ſeems to have the official character of Chriſt eſpecially in his eye; as he had no predeceſſor in his prieſtly office: and hence he proves its ſuperiority to that in the family of Aaron. But even thoſe who take the words in this view, admit that they alſo regard his perſonal character. This muſt neceſſarily be admitted. For had he not been "with-"out father," as man, he would have wanted that perfection which was requiſite according to the nature of the type. "Beginning of days," after the common courſe of nature, would have proved an inſuperable bar to his being "a prieſt "after the power of an endleſs life."

II. In

e Heb. vii. 3.

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11. In various inſtances, God manifeſted his power, in cauſing women to *conceive* beyond the ordinary courſe of nature. There were two great obſtacles to the accompliſhment of the promiſe made to Abraham, of his having iſſue by Sarah. She was conſtitutionally barren; and when the promiſe was reſtricted to her poſterity, ſhe was paſt the time of life. Any of theſe was of itſelf a ſufficient obſtacle. Although ſhe had not been barren, no woman had ever proved a mother in her circumſtances. Hence her ſon Iſaac was an eminent figure of Chriſt; becauſe he was conceived, not properly by ſtrength of nature, but by virtue of the promiſe. This wonderful conception could not but greatly affiſt faith, with reſpect to the promiſe of "the ſeed of the woman." It ſhewed that there was no abſurdity in believing that a virgin ſhould conceive. The deadneſs of Abraham's body, and of Sarah's womb, made the one event naturally as impoſſible as the other. Sarah could, no more than Mary, become a mother, but by a miracle. Iſaac was "born after "the Spirit[f]," in conſequence of his miraculous operation; and thus in a ſtriking manner prefigured Him who was conceived by the power of the ſame divine agent. It is remarkable, that as Sarah and Mary both made ſubſtantially the ſame objection, the ſame anſwer is given in both caſes; as if the Spirit of inſpiration would thus call our attention to the intimate connexion between the two hiſtories. Sarah ſaid, "Shall I of a ſurety

[f] Gal. iv. 29.

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" bear a child, *which am old?*" Mary made a ſimilar objection; " How ſhall this be, ſeeing *I* " *know not a man?*" Both are founded on the apparent impoſſibility of the thing. The reply of the angel to Mary, " With God nothing ſhall " be impoſſible," is materially the ſame with that given to Sarah, " Is any thing too hard for the " LORD?" This, as expreſſed in the verſion of the Old Teſtament, generally in uſe among the Jews when the New was written, is almoſt in the ſame words with thoſe recorded by Luke: " With " God ſhall any thing be impoſſible [g]?"

In various reſpects was Samſon a type of Chriſt; and among others, in the circumſtances of his conception. As an angel appeared to the Virgin, foretelling the conception of Him who ſhould ſave his people from their ſins; that of Samſon, who was a typical Saviour, was foretold in the ſame manner. " There was a certain man of Zorah, " of the family of the Danites, whoſe name was " Manoah, and his wife was barren, and bare not. " And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto the " woman, and ſaid unto her, Behold now, thou art " barren, and beareſt not, but thou ſhalt conceive " and bear a ſon [h]."

As God had in ancient times given different diſplays of his power in this reſpect, to ſtrengthen the faith, and excite the expectation of his people, as to the completion of the great promiſe; when the time was at hand, he would awaken their attention

g Μη αδυνατησει παρα τω Θεω ρημα; Gen. xviii. 14. Ουκ αδυνατησει παρα τω Θεω παν ρημα. Luke i. 37.

h Judges xiii. 2, 3.

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tention by a new diſplay of the ſame kind. The wife of Zacharias appears as another Sarah. Nay, both Abraham and Sarah ſeem to be again brought on the ſtage. For he was an old man, and his wife not only barren, but "well ſtricken in years." There were two myſteries conjoined in the birth of Chriſt; the incarnation of the Angel-JEHOVAH, and his conception in the womb of a virgin. As theſe things were ſo extraordinary, two ſigns are afforded, which might tend to conciliate the faith of that people to whom he was promiſed. For many ages, God had given no immediate revelation of his will. But on this occaſion, there was the viſion of an angel, and the conception of an aged and barren woman.

Divine wiſdom appeared in the choice of the parents, and in the character of the ſon, as well as in the concomitant circumſtances and the ſeaſon of this diſplay of divine power. The *parents* had both been long of the higheſt repute for true religion. "They were both righteous before God, "walking in all the commandments and ordi-"nances of the Lord blameleſs." There could be no reaſonable ſuſpicion, that two ſuch perſons would combine in impoſing a falſe ſtory on the nation. Zacharias being a prieſt, what concerned him muſt have been far better known than if he had been in a private ſtation. Eliſabeth, being a near relation of Mary, the latter had the beſt opportunity of knowing all that concerned this remarkable manifeſtation. *He*, whoſe birth was thus diſtinguiſhed, was no ordinary child.

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He was to be the immediate forerunner of the Meſſiah. The reſpect which his future office bore to the Saviour, marked him out as the moſt proper perſon for a ſign of his miraculous conception. Was John to "be filled with the Holy "Ghoſt from his mother's womb?" The early appearances of extraordinary wiſdom and ſanctity, would be a permanent atteſtation of the truth of the miracles preceding his birth. Such *circumſtances* attended this ſign, that although the parents had been capable of impoſture, no room was left for it. Zacharias was at Jeruſalem, in the temple, engaged in his miniſtration, in the very act of burning incenſe, while "the whole multitude of "the people were praying without," at the time that he was viſited by the angel. Zacharias did not believe his teſtimony, and having demanded a ſign of the truth of it, himſelf became a ſign to all who ſaw him, both of the reality of the viſion, and of the danger of incredulity. For he was "dumb, and not able to ſpeak, un-"til the day that theſe things were performed." The people at firſt "perceived that he had ſeen a "viſion:" and as he continued in the ſame ſtate till "the days of his miniſtration were accom-"pliſhed," and for ſeveral months afterwards; this well-known and extraordinary fact muſt have excited the wonder and expectation of the great body of the nation. The *ſeaſon* in which this ſign was given, was the moſt proper that could have been ſelected. At this time the people in general "looked for redemption in Iſrael." It

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was alſo only a few months before the appearance of that *ſign* which JEHOVAH himſelf was to give [i]. As it prepared the minds of believers, and tended to arouſe the body of the nation; it was eſpecially a mean of confirmation to the faith of Mary. Hence the angel Gabriel, when removing her objection as to the poſſibility of the fact predicted, refers her to Eliſabeth, as a living teſtimony of the power of God, in removing every natural obſtruction to the fulfilment of his promiſe,—of his power in circumſtances that bore the greateſt reſemblance of her own: "And be- "hold thy couſin Eliſabeth, ſhe hath alſo concei- "ved a ſon in her old age; and this is the ſixth "month with her that was called barren. For "with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible [k]."

III. The laws, given to the Iſraelites, concerning *virginity*, ſeem to have had a ſpecial reſpect to the conception and birth of our Saviour. They were of ſuch a nature as powerfully to intereſt, not only young women themſelves in the preſervation of their chaſtity, but alſo their parents. When a woman was married, if it was found that ſhe had formerly been ſeduced; ſhe was not only to be put to death, but to ſuffer at "the door of "her father's houſe [l]." The whole family were thus partly involved in her puniſhment; becauſe they were all bound to watch over her conduct. This was eſpecially incumbent on her father, in whoſe houſe ſhe reſided till ſhe removed to that

i Iſa. vii. 14. k Luke i. 5.—37. l Deut. xxii. 20, 21.

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of her huſband. If a damſel was defiled, after being betrothed, before the conſummation of her marriage, both ſhe and the man who defiled her were to be put to death [m]. That there might be no impoſition, certain tokens were to be produced, atteſted and examined [n]. The trial by the waters of jealouſy, by means of which the truth was miraculouſly diſcovered, was another inſtitution which muſt have had great influence in deterring women from a breach of chaſtity [o]. They were alſo ſubjected to a periodical ſeparation, as unclean. This prevented their being married at this ſeaſon, and put it out of their power to impoſe falſe tokens, in conſequence of their ſituation [p].

Theſe ordinances were indeed meant for the preſervation of chaſtity in general. But they ſeem to have been deſigned to guard the ſtate of virginity, in relation to the miraculous conception of the Saviour. Had the ſlighteſt ground of ſuſpicion remained with Joſeph, he had different ways of putting Mary to trial, and of obtaining ſatisfaction to his own mind. From his character as "a juſt man," we may be aſſured that he would by no means have retained her, had he not been fully convinced that ſhe was with child in a ſupernatural way. All that the promiſe, or the neceſſity of the caſe, expreſsly required, was, that Jeſus ſhould be born of a virgin. This indeed was

m Deut. xxii. 23, 24. n Ver. 15. o Num. v. 11.—31.

p See this ſubject treated at large in Allix's Reflexions on the four laſt Books of Moſes, chap. 20.

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was neceſſary; for, as we have formerly ſeen, he could not otherwiſe have been free from original depravity. But it was the will of God, that he ſhould be born, not merely of a virgin, but of "a "virgin eſpouſed." In this, divine wiſdom eminently appears. For thus God provided means for authenticating the genealogy of Chriſt. Being born, after Mary was betrothed, he was legally the child of Joſeph; and among the Jews, the genealogy was eſpecially reckoned by the father. Thus alſo, a guardian was provided for Mary and her child, during the perſecution of Herod. Beſides, the circumſtance of her being eſpouſed, together with that of Joſeph's taking her to his houſe, preſerved her from being treated by others as a woman loſt to virtue. While, on the one hand, her eſpouſals ſubjected her conduct to the moſt rigid ſcrutiny, the reception given her by Joſeph, on the other, was a public atteſtation of her innocence.

We perceive the bleſſed concurrence of all the Perſons of the adorable Trinity in the work of our redemption. It appears with the fulleſt evidence in the very manner in which Chriſt received our nature. The Father "ſent forth his Son, made "of a woman." The Son himſelf "took on him "the form of a ſervant." The Holy Ghoſt "pre-"pared a body" for him, by ſanctifying part of the ſubſtance of a virgin. What a wonderful diſplay of love to loſt man! How ardently ought we to love that adorable Father who ſent his Son; this

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this co-equal Son, who cheerfully came, who ſaid, "In the volume of thy book it is written of me;" that bleſſed Spirit, who as it were anew began the work of creation for our ſakes!

SECTION XIII.

On Subſtitution and Atonement.—The Doctrine of Subſtitution known to the Church from the beginning.—Impoſition of Hands on the Head of the Victim.—The Victim legally ſubjected to the Curſe.—Atonement made by Blood.—The Covenant confirmed by Sacrifice.—In this the Worſhip of the Church eſpecially conſiſted.—The Ceremonial Inſtitute, even by its Defects, directed to a better Atonement.—This prefigured by the Mercy-ſeat.—The Hiſtory of the true Expiation contained in the New Teſtament.

To proclaim the incarnation of a Divine Perſon, is only part of the deſign of the Spirit of inſpiration. It was a principal branch of his work, to "teſtify beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt." All that is written, with reſpect to his aſſumption of our nature, relates to the work of redemption, which from eternity he had engaged to accompliſh. The Holy Scriptures, as to their great deſign

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ſign and principal object, are juſt an hiſtory of "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the "world [q]."

Before the coming of Chriſt to "take away ſin "by the ſacrifice of himſelf;" there were eſpecially three different ways in which atonement was made; by the puniſhment of the guilty perſon, by the payment of a price, or by the ſubſtitution of the innocent for the guilty.

We ſometimes read of atonement being made, when the guilty were *puniſhed* in their own *perſons*. Thus, when Phineas ſlew the daring tranſgreſſors, who were committing fornication in the camp, it is ſaid that he "made an atonement for "the children of Iſrael [r]." But it is to be obſerved, that the atonement in this inſtance was not made for the ſin of the perſons immediately concerned. For they periſhed in their iniquity. It was accepted of God for the congregation in general, for averting that wrath to which they were ſubjected by this iniquity. For the juſt God, as Governor of the world, demands from collective bodies the puniſhment of open tranſgreſſors; and if this be refuſed, he conſiders the ſociety at large as chargeable with the guilt. So well pleaſed was he with the zeal of Phineas in executing judgment on this occaſion, that the plague, which had gone forth againſt Iſrael, becauſe of their tranſgreſſion in the matter of Peor, was immediately ſtayed [s]. It was counted unto Phineas "for righteouſneſs "in all generations for evermore [t];" and his family

q Rev. xiii. 8. r Num. xxv. 6, 7. 13. s Ver. 8. t Pſal. cvi. 31.

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mily was confirmed in the poſſeſſion of the prieſthood. In like manner, God did not "turn from "the fierceneſs of his anger" againſt his people, till "the accurſed thing was deſtroyed from a-"mong them," in the puniſhment of Achan and his family [u].

Atonement was alſo made by the payment of a *price*. "The LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, "When thou takeſt the ſum of the children of "Iſrael, after their number, then ſhall they give "every man a ranſom for his ſoul unto the LORD "when thou numbereſt them; that there be no "plague among them when thou numbereſt "them." Half a ſhekel, according to the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, which was the double of that commonly current, was to be given for every male who was twenty years old and above. This was called "the atonement-money of the chil-"dren of Iſrael;" and in paying this ſum, they "gave an offering unto the LORD, to make an "atonement for their ſouls [v]." This payment prefigured our being "bought with a price [w];" although "not with corruptible things, as ſilver "and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt." The rich were not to give more, nor the poor leſs. For all ſouls are alike precious in the ſight of God; and although ſome are greater ſinners than others, nothing leſs than an atonement of infinite value can be accepted for any one. This price was to be paid by each individual whoſe age correſponded, every time the Iſraelites were numbered,

[u] Joſh. vii. 12. 26. [v] Exod. xxx. 11.—16. [w] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

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ed, under the penalty of his losing his life by an immediate stroke of divine justice. Thus God testified, that when he makes inquisition, it is impossible for the sinner to stand before him without an atonement.

But the principal mode of making atonement, was by the *substitution* and *punishment* of the *innocent* instead of the guilty; or, to express it in one word, by sacrifice. This kind of expiation being the most common among the Israelites, and containing the most striking figure of the true, it demands our particular attention.

1. The doctrine of *substitution* was well known to the Church from the earliest period. As "Abel offered by faith," while we know that his offering was "of the firstlings of his flock," we may safely infer, that the worship of God by sacrifice was of divine appointment. Now, every sacrifice necessarily implied the idea of substitution. We cannot suppose, that the true worshippers of God were so stupid as to imagine that the offering of brutes could in itself be acceptable to him. They knew, that "if he were hungry, "he would not tell them, because the world is "his, and all the fulness thereof; that he would "not eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of "goats." Did they offer by faith? Then they must have respected not merely the divine institution, but its design. That God, who required sacrifice, would undoubtedly inform them, that what they inflicted on the innocent victims, which they

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they preſented to him, was only what themſelves deſerved.

When the people tranſgreſſed, by worſhipping the golden calf, Moſes, the typical Mediator, who was innocent in this matter, under a deep ſenſe of the neceſſity both of ſatisfaction and of ſubſtitution, propoſed himſelf as a victim of divine vengeance, inſtead of the guilty congregation. "Yet now," he ſaid, "if thou "wilt, forgive their ſin: and if not," if there be no other mode of reconciliation, "blot me, I pray "thee, out of the book which thou haſt written [x]." But a better Mediator was neceſſary.

As true worſhippers could not apprehend that God took pleaſure in ſacrifice for its own ſake, they muſt have known that no victim they offered could have any merit; that there was no proportion between the ſacrifice of a beaſt, and the ſin of a man. They could not indeed "offer by "faith," without looking forward to a better ſubſtitute. Without the exerciſe of faith in the ſuretiſhip of the Meſſiah, their ſervices could not have been accepted. When it is ſaid of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, that they "all "died in faith," we learn what this grace principally reſpected. They had not, as to the ſubſtance, "received the promiſes," but they "ſaw "them afar off, and embraced them [y]." It was Chriſt as a Surety, whom, in the promiſes, they "ſaw afar off." All their ſacrifices bore a direct relation to his "one offering." For in the firſt promiſe

[x] Exod. xxxii. 32. [y] Heb. xi. 13.

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promiſe he was expreſsly revealed as a ſuffering Saviour. Hence, when addreſſing the Father concerning that will, by which we are ſanctified, through the offering of his own body, he ſays; "At the *head* of the book it is written of me, I "delight to do thy will [z]."

11. The *impoſition* of *hands* on the head of the victim, is a circumſtance which particularly deſerves our attention, as a farther proof of ſubſtitution in making atonement. This was the injunction with reſpect to "any man who ſhould "bring an offering.—He ſhall put his hand upon "the head of the burnt-offering; and it ſhall be "accepted for him, to make an atonement for "him [a]." This was an emblem of his transferring his guilt, as far as this could be done, to the victim. If in any inſtance the whole congregation had ſinned ignorantly, and their offence was afterwards known to them, the congregation was to offer a young bullock for the ſin, and the elders, as their repreſentatives, were to "lay their "hands on the head of the bullock before the "LORD [b]." A ſimilar rite was to be obſerved by the high-prieſt, on the great day of atonement. He was to "lay both his hands on the head of "the live-goat, and confeſs over him all the ini-"quities of the children of Iſrael, and all their "tranſgreſſions, in all their ſins, putting them on "the head of the goat [c]." This rite was unworthy

z Pſal. xl. 7, 8. a Lev. i. 4 b Lev. iv. 14, 15.
c Lev. xvi. 21.

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thy of the divine inſtitution, and of man's obſervance; except as typifying that great act of God's juſtice in laying upon Chriſt the iniquities of all his people, and the exerciſe of their faith in cordially aſſenting to this act, and embracing him as their only Surety.

III. The victim was thus legally ſubjected to the *curſe* merited by the tranſgreſſor. As an evidence of this, all the ſin-offerings, whoſe blood was to be carried into the holy place, were to be burned without the camp, that it might not be defiled [d]. This prefigured Chriſt's being "made "a curſe for us," when ſubſtituted as our atoning ſacrifice.

We have already viewed the execution of the ſeven ſons of Saul, becauſe of the guilt of their parent in ſlaying the Gibeonites, as a ſtriking proof of God's viſiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. The ſame event contains a remarkable illuſtration of the doctrines of ſubſtitution and atonement. God ſubjected Iſrael to a temporary curſe, in giving them up to famine for three years, becauſe of Saul and his bloody houſe. According to the will of God, this curſe muſt be transferred to *ſeven* of the ſons of Saul; a myſtical number, expreſſive perhaps of the legal perfection of the atonement thus to be made. Although, as far as appears, they were perſonally innocent, as to this crime, the curſe was transferred to them. This appears from the deſign,

[d] Lev. vi. 30.

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deſign, from the conſequence, and from the manner of their puniſhment. The *deſign* of their puniſhment was legally to remove the guilt of innocent blood from the nation of Iſrael. David, being divinely inſtructed as to the cauſe of the famine, ſaid unto the Gibeonites, "What ſhall I "do for you? and wherewith ſhall I make the a-"tonement, that ye may bleſs the inheritance of "the LORD?" The *conſequence* of the execution and interment of the ſufferers was, that "God was "entreated for the land." He accepted the atonement. But there was alſo ſomething very remarkable in the *manner* of their puniſhment. From God's approbation of this whole affair, there can be no reaſonable doubt that the Gibeonites were providentially directed, not only as to the atonement that they demanded, but the manner in which they propoſed it ſhould be made: "Let "ſeven men of his ſons be delivered unto us, and "we will hang them up—in Gibeah of Saul." They propoſe that themſelves ſhould act as prieſts in this extraordinary ſacrifice; and that the puniſhment ſhould be hanging, the only one pronounced *accurſed* by the law. Their language is ſtill more expreſs. They do not merely ſay, "We "will hang them up;" but, "We will hang "them up *unto the* LORD," as victims offered unto him, and ſolemnly devoted to bear that curſe to which the nation had been ſubjected, and legally to bear it away. The expreſſion is afterwards a little varied, in the narrative of the fact; but ſo as ſtill to convey the ſame idea. "They

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"hanged them on the hill *before* the LORD[e]." The legal atonement was to be made for Iſrael, by means of their ſuffering in the very ſame manner in which He was to ſuffer, who was truly to be made a curſe for us, being hanged on a tree; and who was thus to take away the iniquity of his people in one day. God was not entreated for the land, till theſe men were not only hanged, but buried. This having been long delayed, David viewed it as a matter of ſuch importance that he engaged in the work himſelf. For according to the law, he that was hanged, was to be buried on the ſame day, as being "the curſe "of God[f]." This ordinance prefigured that the burial of Chriſt ſhould be a ſolemn and practical evidence that our ſins were covered and removed from God's ſight, ſo as no more to riſe up againſt us in judgment.

IV. It was neceſſary that atonement ſhould be made by the ſhedding of *blood*. What rites ſoever were uſed, without this in ordinary caſes there was no proper expiation. For "without "ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion." It was not enough that the victim was ſlain: it was neceſſary that it ſhould be ſlain by the effuſion of blood. This inſtitution referred both to the curſe of the broken covenant, and to the manner in which it ſhould be removed. The ſentence of the law was, "Dying thou ſhalt die;" "The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die." Now, it is declared

[e] 2 Sam. xxi. 1.—14. [f] Deut. xxi. 23.

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declared that "the blood is the ſoul," that is, "the life;" not as if the blood were, ſtrictly ſpeaking, either the ſoul, or the animal life; but becauſe the animal ſpirits, which are the organs of the ſoul, are in the blood. It, therefore, was the will of God that the blood of the victim ſhould be ſhed; not only to ſhew the reality of its death, as, when the blood is ſeparated from the body, the life is gone; but to declare that the perſon, for whom it was offered, had forfeited his life, his very ſoul, to divine juſtice, and that the law would not mitigate its ſentence. In this ſhedding of blood there was a plain declaration of the ſubſtitution of the one for the other, as appears from the language of God to the Iſraelites; "The life of the fleſh is in the blood; and I have "given it to you upon the altar, to make an atone-"ment for your ſouls; for it is the blood that "maketh an atonement for the ſoul[g];" literally "the *ſoul* of the fleſh is in the blood." For the ſame word is uſed, as afterwards when we read of "an atonement for the ſoul." The life or ſoul of a beaſt is not here put on a footing with that of man. But this language is employed to declare that when the blood of a beaſt was ſhed, ſo that death enſued, all the ſoul which it poſſeſſed was given up inſtead of thoſe for whom it was offered. This mode of offering alſo fitly prefigured the work of Chriſt, in "pouring out his "ſoul unto death," in ſhedding his blood for the remiſſion of ſins.

[g] Lev. xvii. 11.

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There was but one caſe, in which atonement could be made, for any particular tranſgreſſion, without blood. This was merely on the ſuppoſition of abſolute neceſſity. If the offerer was ſo very poor that he could bring nothing that had blood, he might preſent a ſmall quantity of flour [h].

"By the law almoſt all things were purged "with blood." Not only the tabernacle and all the holy veſſels, but alſo the garments of the prieſts were ſprinkled with it [i]. Before there could be any acceptable miniſtration for others, it was requiſite that the prieſts ſhould make atonement for themſelves [k]. For the altar itſelf an atonement was neceſſary [l].

v. Sacrifice was the great mean of *confirming* the *covenant* of grace, as diſpenſed before the coming of Chriſt. When God revealed this covenant to Abraham, he commanded him to ſacrifice ſeveral creatures, and to divide them into different parts [m]. Hence the phraſe often uſed in the Old Teſtament, and indeed in the paſſage referred to [n], of *ſtriking* or *cutting* a covenant; becauſe it was made by ſtriking the victims, and ſometimes by dividing them, as in the ſacrifice offered by Abraham. This implied that the parties imprecated a ſimilar vengeance on themſelves, if they broke their engagement; eſpecially as they ſometimes paſſed between the parts of the divided

h Lev. v. 11.—13. i Exod. xxix. 21. k Lev. xvi. 6.
l Exod. xxix. 36. m Gen. xv. 9, 10. n Ver. 18.

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divided victims [o]. When God revealed his covenant, the effuſion of blood always referred to the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and ſignified that the complete ſatisfaction, made by this ſacrifice, was and could be the only foundation of a gracious covenant, and of the reſtoration of tranſgreſſors to the divine favour.

This was the great confirmation of the covenant made with the Iſraelites. "For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats,—and ſprinkled both the book and all the people; ſaying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you [p]." This prefigured the confirmation of the new covenant by blood of infinitely greater value and efficacy.

By this blood, it was at length actually confirmed, in the death of the antitypical Surety. Hence, in "coming to Jeſus the Mediator of the "new covenant," we alſo come "to the blood of "ſprinkling:" and the commemorative cup, in the ordinance of the Supper, is called "the new "covenant in his blood." For as all the ſaving benefits of the covenant were purchaſed, they are all confirmed, by this blood, and made over to us as legacies, which have derived full validity from the death of the Teſtator.

When men entered into leagues of amity with each other, it was alſo called *ſtriking* a covenant; and it would appear, that as they ſlaughtered

 beaſts,

o Jer. xxxiv. 18. p Heb. ix. 19, 20.

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beasts, it was not merely to feast on them, but as an act of religion q. The mode enjoined by God, when he entered into covenant with man, seems to have been the pattern they followed. It is most probable, indeed, either that this plan was adopted in consequence of divine direction; or that the believing patriarchs meant to give greater solemnity to the transaction, by invoking that God as their witness, with whom they had "made a covenant by sacrifice r." They acknowledged him, not only as the Maker of heaven and earth, but in that peculiar and federal character in which he had made himself known to the Church by a revelation of grace.

VI. The *worship* of the Church, from the beginning, especially consisted in sacrifice. Whatever other acts were performed, they were unacceptable, except in as far as they were connected with this. No pure offering could be presented, unless the hands of the worshipper were sprinkled with blood. Read the history of the Church, in relation to her religious services; and for four thousand years it will be found written in the blood of her sacrifices.

The first account given of acceptable worship, is that of the offering of Abel; and as his faith was manifested in this way, we may be assured that the faith of all the antediluvian patriarchs had the same evidence. Were further proof necessary, we have it in Noah's particular acquaintance

q Gen. xxxi. 54. r Psal. l. 5.

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ance with the diſtinction between clean and unclean beaſts or fowls; which certainly proceeded from the uſe which had been hitherto made of them in the worſhip of God. Did divine juſtice require that the wicked ſhould be "cut down out "of time," that their "foundation ſhould be over-"thrown with a flood?" Still God could not look with pleaſure on the earth. An ablution by water was not ſufficient. It muſt be waſhed with blood. He could not "ſmell a ſavour of reſt," till Noah, as the high-prieſt of a new world emerging from the waters, preſented a ſacrifice "of "every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl[s]." And it was undoubtedly with a view to this, as the principal ſervice of the Church, that God preſerved in the ark thoſe beaſts and fowls, which were clean, by ſevens; "while the unclean were "admitted only by two[t]."

So fully were the patriarchs convinced of the importance of this worſhip, that when they took up their reſidence in any particular place, they no ſooner pitched their tent, than they erected an altar. Even while on a journey, if they enjoyed any ſpecial token of the divine favour, they halted till they had built an altar, and called on the name of the LORD. While the progreſs of thoſe, whom the world calls *great*, might, even in an early period, be marked by the remains of their encampments, or by the carcaſes of thoſe whom they had ſlain; the various ſtations of the patriarchs might be traced by the altars they erected,

[s] Gen. viii. 20, 21. [t] Chap. vii. 2, 3.

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as monuments of their reconciliation with God, and of their peace with man [u].

When God made choice of a peculiar people, for the preſervation of his truths and ordinances, the ſacrifical worſhip of the Church was augmented, inſtead of being diminiſhed. The Paſſover was not merely to be obſerved on that night in which the deſtroying angel paſſed through, but during the exiſtence of the Church of Iſrael. We can ſcarcely conceive a more lively emblem of ſubſtitution, than what took place in its firſt celebration. The Iſraelites were to ſprinkle the blood of the paſchal lamb on the door-poſts and lintels of their houſes; and wherever this blood was ſprinkled, the firſt-born were ſaved, while thoſe of the Egyptians were involved in a common deſtruction. Here the blood of the lamb was evidently ſubſtituted and accepted inſtead of that of the firſt-born of Iſrael; and clearly prefigured the ſlaying of that "Lamb of God, who "taketh away the ſin of the world," by the efficacy of whoſe "precious blood, as of a lamb "without blemiſh, and without ſpot," we are redeemed from eternal deſtruction.

It was the will of God, that, from the nature of her worſhip, the Church ſhould conſtantly be taught the neceſſity of an atonement. Blood was perpetually ſtreaming before her eyes. The Lamb of God was typically offered every morning, and every evening. On the Sabbath, the oblation was doubled; two lambs being offered inſtead of one. For,

[u] Gen. xii. 7, 8.; xiii. 3, 4. 18.

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For, on this day of ſpiritual reſt, the efficacy of the blood of Jeſus is moſt eminently manifeſted, in the communication of grace to the ſouls of men. This ſacrifice was offered, both morning and evening, for the whole congregation of Iſrael, and in their name [v]. This denoted the exerciſe of all the ſpiritual Iſrael, in looking daily to Chriſt as their ſacrifice, through whom alone they have acceſs to God, and in deriving virtue from him as "made unto them ſanctification." A diſtinct ſacrifice was to be offered every new moon [w]. When the Iſraelites preſented their firſt-fruits, in the feaſt of harveſt, they could not be accepted ſingly. It was neceſſary that blood ſhould be offered with them [x]. For however acceptable a ſacrifice of thanſgiving be to God, it is acceptable only through the meritorious blood of Chriſt.

Beſides the multitude of ſacrifices, occaſionally offered for the tranſgreſſions of individuals, one day every year was peculiarly appropriated to expiation. It was therefore diſtinctively denominated "a day of atonement [y]." Such was the ſolemnity to be obſerved on this day, that the high-prieſt was previouſly to offer for his own purification, in the ſame manner as he had done at his firſt conſecration [z]. Notwithſtanding the multiplicity of offerings, many ſins muſt have been committed during the courſe of a year, for which no atonement had been made. The atonement made on this day was therefore meant, for legally taking

[v] Num. xxviii. 2, 3. 9. [w] Ver. 11. [x] Lev. xxiii. 18, 19.
[y] Ver. 27, 28. [z] Lev. xvi. 5, 6.; ix. 2. 8.

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taking away the guilt of ſins of every kind, which had been formerly committed, and not expiated. But it was not confined to theſe. As the atonement was made for the whole congregation, both prieſts and people; it would ſeem to have been meant for all their former ſins, for there is no exception of any. Thus it at once proclaimed the imperfection of the legal ſacrifices, and in a very ſtriking manner prefigured the efficacy of that atonement to be made by the antitypical High-prieſt, when he ſhould "remove the iniquity of "the land in one day [a]."

VII. Even the *defective* nature of the ceremonial inſtitute directed the worſhippers to a better atonement. Sacrifice was appointed for ſome ſins, and not for others; appointed for the ſmalleſt offences, and not for the greateſt. Thus, according to the law, no atonement was provided for idolatry or murder. Theſe crimes, indeed, and others of a like nature, admitted of no legal expiation; becauſe the tranſgreſſor was to be puniſhed with death. But as God proclaimed that he was merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquities of every kind, and yet appointed no expiation in ſome caſes; it ſhewed, that he had a better atonement provided, the efficacy of which might extend even to thoſe who could find no mercy from the law. Of this we have an example in the caſe of David. God defired not ſacrifice or burnt-offering; becauſe none had been appointed for the expiation of

[a] Zech. iii. 9.

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of ſuch crimes. Yet he intimated to him, that he had "taken away his ſin." This intimation being made by Him who "will by no means clear the "guilty," plainly ſignified, that divine mercy was exerciſed in relation to a better atonement than any the law could provide.

VIII. The *mercy-ſeat* was a permanent figure of a true atonement. As the ark contained the two tables of the law, its lid or covering was overlaid with pure gold; and on this the cloud of glory reſted. This was called the *covering mercy-ſeat*, from a word which primarily ſignifies to cover, or to overlay with pitch; and in a ſecondary ſenſe, to expiate, to make reconciliation, and alſo to pardon. As it interpoſed between the glory of God and the tables of teſtimony; it ſignified the work of Chriſt, in covering our breaches of the law from the holineſs and juſtice of God, by interpoſing himſelf as a Surety. We thus perceive the reaſon why the ſame word, which ſignifies to cover, is uſed to expreſs the bleſſing of forgiveneſs: for when our ſins are pardoned, they are covered from the eye of God as a condemning Judge, the perfect righteouſneſs of our Elder Brother being caſt over them. It is perhaps not unworthy of obſervation, that this word occurs but once in its literal and primary ſignification, to denote the covering of pitch given to the ark in which Noah and his family were ſaved [b]. As this was neceſſary for preſerving them from the waters

[b] Gen. vi. 14.

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waters by which the wicked were deſtroyed; the *covering* given to another ark repreſented the neceſſity of a better defence, as it was a type of the ſame ſalvation prefigured by the deliverance of the Church from the deluge [c].

The word, uſed to denote the covering of the ark, is by our tranſlators very properly rendered *mercy-ſeat*. For the Spirit of inſpiration employs a term preciſely of this meaning, in the New Teſtament, when Chriſt is called a *propitiatory* [d]; the ſame term indeed, which often occurs in the Septuagint, as expreſſing the ſenſe of the Hebrew. The literal mercy-ſeat was a ſtriking emblem of him, "whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitia-"tory." For not only are our tranſgreſſions of the law covered by his righteouſneſs; but as the typical mercy-ſeat as it were united the law of God and the viſible ſymbol of his preſence in the Church, ſo in Chriſt "mercy and truth are met "together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed "each other."

On the day of atonement, the mercy-ſeat was to be ſprinkled with the blood of the ſacrifices [e]. This ſhews how we are accepted. It is only becauſe of the atonement which our Redeemer hath made by the ſacrifice of himſelf. Is he "ſet forth "to be a propitiatory," that is, "a mercy-ſeat?" It is only "through faith *in his blood*, to declare "God's righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſins." The blood of the legal ſacrifices was to be ſprinkled before the mercy-ſeat ſeven times. This being

c 1 Pet. iii. 21. d Rom. iii. 21. e Lev. xvi. 14.

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ing uſed in Scripture as a myſtical number, expreſſive of perfection, it intimated that he, who "is our propitiation," ſhould give complete ſatisfaction to divine juſtice.

When the high-prieſt entered the moſt holy place with the blood of the ſacrifices, the cloud of incenſe was to cover the ark and mercy-ſeat [f]. This teſtifies, not only that the ſacrifice of Chriſt is "of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour;" but that, on the ground of his own oblation, he ſtill effectually intercedes for his people; nay, that all the benefit they derive from his oblation, is immediately the effect of his eternal life as an interceding High-prieſt.

Whereſoever the profeſſors of the true religion were ſcattered, they were ſtill to pray towards the mercy-ſeat [g]. Thus are we taught, that our prayers and other duties can be accepted only through the antitypical propitiatory. Whatever we aſk the Father, it muſt be in the name of Chriſt; that is, in the exerciſe of faith in his ſacrifice and interceſſion.

All the fellowſhip with God, which the Church of Iſrael enjoyed, was in relation to this type, according to his promiſe; "There I will meet with "thee, and I will commune with thee from above "the mercy-ſeat [h]." In like manner, there can be no communion with God, no reception of any covenant bleſſing, no intimation of his love, but through the one Mediator. Our "fellowſhip is "with

f Lev. xvi. 13.

g 1 Kings vi. 16. 19.; viii. 47, 48.; Pſal. xxviii. 2.; Dan. vi. 10.

h Exod. xxv. 22.

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"with the Father," only as he hath "called us "to the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our "Lord."

IX. As the Old Teſtament contains a ſymbolical repreſentation of the atonement, we have, in the New, a diſtinct and complete hiſtory of the *real* expiation made for ſin, by the *ſacrifice* of Jeſus Chriſt. From this hiſtory it is evident, that the one correſponds with the other, as the ſubſtance with its ſhadow. Under the law, the moſt uſual ſacrifice was a lamb, which fitly repreſented the innocence and meekneſs of the "Lamb of God," as well as his uſefulneſs to the Church, ſupplying her both with food and raiment. Was this offering to be without blemiſh? Jeſus was "holy, harmleſs, "undefiled and ſeparate from ſinners." Was it to be taken out of the flock[i]? Jeſus was "raiſed "up from among his brethren." Strength and youth were requiſite in the typical victim; and our Saviour ſuffered in the prime of life. The ſacrifice, in the paſſover, was ſeparated for ſome time before it was offered. Jeſus was ſeparated or ſet apart, as the Surety for ſinners, in the eternal purpoſe and covenant, in his miraculous conception, and in his ſolemn inauguration at Jordan. The paſchal lamb was thus ſeparated four days; and it has been obſerved, that Chriſt made his ſolemn entry into Jeruſalem, nearly about the ſame time before his ſuffering[k]. Were the ſacrifices under the law hallowed or ſanctified, in their being

i Exod. xii. 5. k John xii. 1. 12.

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ing offered to the LORD[l]? Jeſus ſanctified himſelf, *for the ſake* of his people, in his one offering[m]. Were the hands of the prieſts, in name of all the congregation of Iſrael, laid on the victim? The hands of the prieſts were indeed upon him, whom God had delivered up as our Surety. They conſpired with the rulers againſt him. He was taken by their officers, and crucified at their inſtigation, the multitude aſſenting to his death. Was it requiſite that not a bone of the paſchal lamb ſhould be broken. In him this type was ſtrictly fulfilled, although in this inſtance there was a deviation from the common mode of treating thoſe who were crucified. Could there be no typical remiſſion "without the ſhedding of "blood?" From the accidental conduct of one of the heathen ſoldiers, no leſs uncommon than the circumſtance juſt now mentioned, the blood of the great Sacrifice was actually ſhed. The action of the ſoldier was accidental as to him, as proceeding from the mere wantonneſs of barbarity; though immutably determined in the counſel of God, and neceſſary in order to the completion of the prophecies and figures. Was the victim under the law ceremonially accurſed? Jeſus ſuſtained the curſe, bearing the wrath of a holy and ſin-avenging God, in our ſtead. Was the ſacrifice, after the blood was ſhed, to be conſumed with that ſacred fire which came down from heaven, and burned on the altar? The ſacrifice of Chriſt's human nature, as preſented on the

l Lev. xxii. 1, 2. m John xvii. 19.

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the altar of the divine, was fired by that holy flame of love, kindled by the Spirit in the heart of our adorable Surety. Was it neceſſary that incenſe ſhould be offered with the blood of the victim? Chriſt not only entered into the holy place not made with hands, with his own blood; but even in the very act of offering, he "made interceſſion for "the tranſgreſſors." Was the preſervation of the life of the high-prieſt, after he had offered and entered into the preſence of God, a token of the legal acceptableneſs of the ſacrifice? The reſurrection, aſcenſion, and eternal life of Jeſus, as our interceding High-prieſt, afford the moſt full and ſatisfactory evidence of the perfection of his oblation.

From the hiſtory of atonement, it is clear that God will not *pardon* ſin without a ſatisfaction to his juſtice. From the beginning he would not be worſhipped without blood, that he might demonſtrate to the Church the indiſpenſable neceſſity of expiation. As all her ſacrifices were unacceptable without faith, ſhe was taught that they had no worth in themſelves for taking away ſin. As the faith required, was that which looked forward to the ſacrifice of "the Prince of life;" ſhe was alſo inſtructed in the neceſſity of an atonement of infinite value.

We have at the ſame time a wonderful diſplay of the *grace* of God. This might be illuſtrated in a variety of reſpects. Let one ſuffice at preſent. He often informed his worſhippers, that he

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he had no delight in the ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts. When his deſign in appointing them was overlooked, he expreſſed his deteſtation at theſe very ſacrifices which he had himſelf required. Yet, for about four thouſand years, he accepted theſe, granting pardon and eternal life to all who offered them in faith. He beſtowed all new-covenant bleſſings on his people, according to the nature of the diſpenſation, on the credit of that real atonement which was to be made in the end of ages. The ſacrifice of Chriſt, as it was neceſſary for the actual purchaſe of redemption, was alſo neceſſary for the vindication of the eſſential juſtice of God. Hence it is ſaid, that God hath ſet forth his Son "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to "declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins "that are paſt through the forbearance of God; "to declare at this time his righteouſneſs, that he "might be juſt" to the claims of his own adorable perfections, and yet "the juſtifier of him that be-"lieveth in Jeſus [n]."

n Rom. iii. 25, 26.

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SECTION XIV.

The Doctrine of Imputation illuſtrated,—from the Raiment provided for our Firſt Parents, after the Fall;—from the Guilty being legally accounted Innocent, in conſequence of ceremonial Atonement;—from the ancient Cuſtom of Feaſting on the Sacrifice;—from the manner in which Salvation was conferred on Believers under the Old Teſtament.

With the doctrines of Subſtitution and Atonement, which we have already conſidered, that of Imputation is moſt intimately connected. All the three, indeed, are juſt links of one precious chain. Guilt is imputed to a ſubſtitute, that atonement may be made; atonement is made, that the righteouſneſs procured by it may be imputed to him for whom the puniſhment was ſuſtained. Thus the guilt of all the elect was imputed to Chriſt as their Surety. In this character he paid their debt, that his righteouſneſs might be legally accounted theirs. Of this important article of our faith, we have not only a doctrinal, but an hiſtorical and ſymbolical, exhibition.

1. This was taught by the *raiment* which God provided for our firſt parents, after they had ſinned.

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ned. "Unto Adam alſo, and to his wife, did the "LORD God make coats of ſkins, and clothed "them [o]." Here ſeveral things deſerve our attention.

This raiment was made of *ſkins*. It has been generally ſuppoſed, that the ſkins referred to were thoſe of the beaſts which our common parents offered in ſacrifice, after the revelation of mercy. The paſſage indeed has been viewed as a proof of the divine inſtitution of ſacrifices, immediately after the fall. There is every reaſon for viewing it in this light, when we conſider the character of Chriſt as "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation "of the world;" and what has been formerly obſerved concerning Abel's acceptable ſacrifice. He could not have "offered of the firſtlings "of the flock—by faith," without a divine warrant; and it is totally improbable that Abel ſhould have been the firſt who preſented an offering of this kind.

The circumſtance of God's *making* theſe garments for them, is very remarkable. This is the only raiment that God himſelf ever made. But he never works in vain. It was not neceſſary, that He ſhould deign to perform this work, as if it had been too difficult for them. Although they had needed direction, he could eaſily have given it. But they had already manifeſted their ingenuity in "ſewing fig-leaves together," for a covering [p]. We muſt conclude, therefore, that this act of divine condeſcenſion was meant to con-

o Gen. iii. 21. p Ver. 7.

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vey ſpiritual inſtruction; that it was a token of his acceptance of their ſacrifices, and of his accounting them as innocent as the victims they had offered, as their faith, by means of theſe, terminated on the ſpotleſs innocence of the promiſed ſeed. We muſt view this act of God as a ſymbolical, but ſolemn, teſtimony, that he had provided for them "a robe of righteouſneſs, and garments "of ſalvation." Did "the LORD God make" this covering? And is not the raiment, provided for us in the goſpel, "the righteouſneſs of God?" Is it not a righteouſneſs fulfilled by a divine Perſon?

This covering was made by God, *inſtead* of that which our firſt parents had themſelves provided. It may thus be viewed as expreſſive of the excellency of our Redeemer's righteouſneſs, as oppoſed to our own; and as denoting the gracious work which God performs towards the veſſels of mercy, in bringing them to renounce all their righteouſneſſes as filthy rags. They "made "themſelves *aprons*" only; but God "made "them *coats*." This might be meant to ſignify both the extent of their guilt, and of the Surety-righteouſneſs of Jeſus. They looked only to the bodily nakedneſs, and provided a covering for thoſe parts alone, over which modeſty draws a veil. But God teſtifies at once the imperfection of their views, and of their raiment. He declares that the whole man is defiled by ſin, and that we cannot appear before him, without raiment that ſhall

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ſhall completely cover us. For any covering, that the ſinner can provide for himſelf, is "narrower than that he can wrap himſelf in it [q]." Their aprons were of *fig-leaves*, and therefore could neither defend them from the ſtorm, nor laſt for any length of time. The coats that God made were of *ſkins*; and fitly repreſented that righteouſneſs, which proves a complete defence, and which endures for ever. By this gracious action, then, our divine Surety, who appeared in Paradiſe after the fall, ſymbolically ſupplied them with "white raiment, that they might be clothed, "and that the ſhame of their nakedneſs might "not appear [r]."

This covering was provided for *both*. "Unto "Adam, and to his wife, did the LORD God make "coats." Had he meant merely to inſtruct them in the proper mode of providing a covering for their bodily nakedneſs, or defending themſelves from the inclemency of the weather; it had been enough to make raiment for one, and thus to leave an excitement to diligence. But here alſo we perceive the myſtery of the divine conduct in this action. Both had ſinned, and thus loſt the garment of original righteouſneſs; therefore, both needed a complete covering. Both believed the promiſe concerning the ſeed of the woman, and in the faith of this promiſe, concurred in offering ſacrifice; both, therefore, received the ſame token of acceptance. "The righteouſneſs of God," which this raiment prefigured, "is unto all and

q Iſa. xxviii. 20. r Rev. iii. 18.

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"upon all them that believe; for there is no "difference. For all have ſinned, and come ſhort "of the glory of God [s]." Here "there is neither "male nor female; for we are all one in Chriſt "Jeſus [t]."

The LORD God not only made theſe coats for our firſt parents, but *clothed* them. This doubtleſs prefigured that work which our gracious God ſtill performs, when he "juſtifieth the ungodly." He it is who clothes them with the garments of ſalvation, who covers them with the robe of righteouſneſs [u]. It is not enough that he hath made this garment for us, and brought it near in the goſpel. Still will we prefer our wretched coverings of fig-leaves, unleſs God himſelf put it on us. It is the work of the Father, in his economical character as "the Judge of all," to impute the righteouſneſs of the Surety to the ſinner, legally to account it his. It is the work of Chriſt, as our Kinſman-Redeemer, to caſt his ſkirt over us [v]. This gracious work he performs in relation to his Church, as he teſtifies to her; "When I "paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, "thy time was a time of love, and I ſpread my "ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs [w]."

It was in conſequence of the *faith* of our firſt parents, that they were thus covered. When it is ſaid, "Unto Adam *alſo*, and to his wife, did "the LORD God make coats," there may be a reference, in this connective particle, to the promiſe previouſly

[s] Rom. iii. 22, 23. [t] Gal. iii. 28. [u] Iſa. lxi. 10.
[v] Ruth iii. 9. [w] Ezek. xvi. 8.

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previouſly revealed, as well as to their faith. For in the verſe immediately preceding, we are informed, that "Adam called his wife *Eve*, becauſe ſhe was "the mother of all living:" and this ſurely expreſſes his faith in the promiſe of life by the ſeed of the woman; and ſignifies, that he viewed her as the mother of all who ſhould be made alive unto God. For, otherwiſe, he might rather have called her the mother of all dying; in correſpondence with the account elſewhere given of himſelf[x]. Now, it is only by faith that we are intereſted in this righteouſneſs. It is indeed put upon us by God. But it is "upon them" only "that believe." Therefore it is ſaid to be "by "the faith of Jeſus Chriſt[y]."

Here I ſhall only obſerve further, that this whole tranſaction, both of Adam's offering ſacrifice, and of God's clothing him with the ſkins, has been viewed as the origin of that ordinance afterwards given to the Iſraelites; "The prieſt "that offereth any man's burnt-offering, even the "prieſt ſhall have to himſelf the *ſkin* of the burnt-"offering which he hath offered[z]."

11. He, who according to the law had been formerly accounted a *tranſgreſſor*, was, in conſequence of the inſtituted atonement, *legally viewed* as *innocent*. What was done by the prieſt, with reſpect to leproſy, ſeems to have a ſpecial reſpect to the bleſſing of juſtification. He was to pronounce the perſon clean or unclean. Now, juſtification

x 1 Cor. xv. 22. y Rom. iii. 22. z Lev. vii. 8.

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cation is a legal declaration, that a perſon is righteous in the ſight of God. Even when the plague was already healed, the prieſt could not pronounce him clean who had been leprous, until he made atonement for him by blood [a]. *Seven* times was he to ſprinkle blood "upon him that was to be "cleanſed;" which ſignified the imputation of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to the ſinner, and the *perfection* of his juſtification, in conſequence of this ſprinkling. The rite of ſprinkling is indeed generally underſtood, as if it had excluſively denoted our ſanctification; but improperly, we apprehend. For the blood of Chriſt is called "the "blood of ſprinkling," and ſaid to "ſpeak better "things" than that of Abel; where its juſtifying efficacy is evidently meant, as oppoſed to the condemning cry of the other. And when the blood of Chriſt, as typified by "the blood of bulls and "of goats," is ſaid to "purge our conſcience "from dead works [b];" juſtification is intended as well as ſanctification: for theſe works, as dead, are not only defiling, but damning.

Was the prieſt not only to make atonement for the leper, but to pronounce him clean? This fitly repreſents the work of our royal High-prieſt, who is exalted "to give—forgiveneſs of ſins [c]." He not only pronounces the ſpiritual leper clean: but he does ſo, in conſequence of an act of his own ſovereign pleaſure. He ſays, "I will, be "thou clean [d]."

When

a Lev. xiv. 7. b Heb. ix. 14, 15. c Acts v. 31.
d Matth. viii. 3.

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When ſacrifice was offered for all Iſrael, the legal innocence of the victim is repreſented as imputed to the whole congregation. Hence, with reſpect to the day of atonement, it is ſaid; "On "that day ſhall the prieſt make an atonement for "you, that ye may be *clean from all your ſins* be-"fore the LORD[e]."

III. The profeſſors of religion were, in various inſtances, admitted to *feaſt* on the *ſacrifices* they had offered unto God. This was a token of the acceptance of their perſons, as legally juſtified through the imputation of the innocence of the victims whoſe blood they had ſhed. This, it would appear, was a very ancient cuſtom. When Jacob entered into a covenant with Laban, he "offered ſacrifice upon the mount, and called his "brethren to eat bread[f]." As a ſolemn pledge of complete reconciliation, they ate together of what had been offered in ſacrifice. Some indeed ſuppoſe, that the language means no more than that Jacob killed ſome of his herd or flock for a feaſt. But the expreſſion literally is, he "ſacri-"ficed a ſacrifice;" which cannot, conſiſtently with its ordinary uſe, be underſtood of preparation for a common meal. Before the law was given from Sinai, we find Aaron and the elders of Iſrael feaſting in a religious manner on that ſacrifice of thankſgiving, which had been made by Jethro the father-in-law of Moſes[g]. By the law, it was provided that the people ſhould feaſt on

[e] Lev. xvi. 30. [f] Gen. xxxi. 54. [g] Exod. xviii. 12.

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on the peace-offerings, in that place which God was to ſelect for the permanent reſidence of his ſanctuary [h]. All the Iſraelites, who were not legally unclean, were, according to divine appointment, to feaſt on the paſchal lamb, which had been offered to God in ſacrifice, as a figure of Chriſt. Now, this privilege was a token of divine acceptance, through the ſacrifice, as prefiguring that which ſhould be offered for the actual expiation of ſin. Something better is conferred on us. Becauſe "Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed "for us," we are called to "keep the feaſt," by faith to feed on him, to eat and drink his blood: and this is given us as a ſeal of all ſpiritual bleſſings, and eſpecially of the imputation of his righteouſneſs. For "this cup," ſaith Chriſt, "is the "New Teſtament in my blood, ſhed for many, for "the *remiſſion* of ſins."

IV. All the patriarchs and ſaints under the Old Teſtament were *ſaved* by *imputation*. This is evident from their hiſtory, as recorded in both parts of the ſacred canon; and eſpecially from the beautiful and ſtriking compend given of it in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews. They were ſaved, not by their own works, but by faith, as contradiſtinguiſhed from them all. This their faith reſpected a revealed righteouſneſs, a righteouſneſs without them, totally different from any internal work of the Spirit, or external holineſs. They were not ſaved by their ſacrifices, as if theſe in themſelves had

[h] Lev. vii. 15.; Deut. xii. 5. 7.

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had been worthy of divine acceptance; nor by the act of ſacrificing, as an act of obedience to the letter of God's commandment; but by means of faith, as reſpecting a better ſacrifice, a perfect and everlaſting righteouſneſs. Noah was "an heir "of the righteouſneſs which is by faith [i]." Abraham "believed God, and it was counted unto him "for righteouſneſs," or as afterwards, "it was "imputed to him for righteouſneſs [k]." This can only be underſtood of faith, as embracing the righteouſneſs of the promiſed ſeed; not of faith as itſelf conſtituting the righteouſneſs of Abraham. For this would directly oppoſe the whole current of the Apoſtle's reaſoning. This would be to convert faith into a legal work; to make juſtification an act of God reſpecting men as *godly* becauſe of their believing; to exhibit the reward as, not of grace, but of debt. When it is ſaid, that Noah "became an heir of the righteouſneſs "which is by faith," the very language uſed implies, that this righteouſneſs is eſſentially diſtinct from all that which conſtitutes our ſanctification. A man is not ſaid to "become an heir" of what he hath himſelf acquired. This expreſſion denotes a legal tranſmiſſion from another, of what is not primarily one's own. The language reſpects an adoption, proceeding wholly from grace, of thoſe who are naturally aliens; and their admiſſion through faith to a participation of that juſtifying righteouſneſs which is "unto all, and upon "all them that believe."

"Bleſſed,"

i Heb. xi. 7. k Rom. iv. 4. 5. 22.

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"Bleſſed" indeed "is the man to whom the "LORD imputeth not iniquity!" May it be our great concern, and our diſtinguiſhing privilege, to partake of this bleſſedneſs! But it can be ours, only as enabled from the heart to renounce all our righteouſneſſes as filthy rags, and to ſay in faith, "Surely in JEHOVAH have I righteouſ-"neſs."

SECTION XV.

The Neceſſity of Almighty Power for changing the Heart, illuſtrated from the Hiſtory of Creation;—from the Inefficacy of the ſevereſt Judgments;—from the Hiſtory of the promiſed Seed;—from the nature of the Victories obtained by Iſrael;—from their being ſtill taught to depend ſolely on God;—from ſome Circumſtances attending the rebuilding of the Temple;—from the perſonal Miniſtry of Jeſus.

EVERY man, who has carefully and impartially read the Holy Scriptures, muſt have remarked, that it is evidently the intention of the Spirit of inſpiration, to prove in a variety of ways the inefficacy of external means, and to ſhew the indiſpenſable neceſſity of almighty power in changing

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ging the hearts of men. This is done, not merely of profeſſed deſign, but often as it were incidentally. As the light of divine truth, with reſpect to this important ſubject, beams forth with the greateſt luſtre, in the expreſs doctrines of revelation; many of its precious rays are ſcattered through the hiſtory of the Church, and illuminate even the ſhadows which in part concealed her beauty during the early period of her exiſtence.

1. This doctrine is illuſtrated by the hiſtory of *creation*. It is ſaid perhaps, What hath the original creation of man to do with his ſalvation from a ſtate of ſin? But the connexion is very intimate. The work of God, in the renovation of the heart, is in Scripture frequently repreſented as a new creation. "We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works [l]." "If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creation [m]." This inſpired language remits us to the hiſtory of the firſt creation, as exhibiting the pattern of the ſecond.

All things were made of nothing. There was no pre-exiſtent matter. This fitly repreſents the natural ſtate of man, as ruined by ſin. He hath no actual life, no latent principle of life, or diſpoſition towards it. Or ſhall we view creation in its firſt appearance, when "the earth was without form and void," or empty; when "darkneſs was upon the face of the deep?" Have we

l Eph. ii. 10. m 2 Cor. v. 17.

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we not here a ſtriking repreſentation of the natural ſituation of the ſoul? It appears "without form," totally diſordered; the inferior faculties ruling over the ſuperior, the will and affections trampling on the underſtanding and conſcience, ſpurning all their dictates, and threatening the eternal deſtruction of the ſinner. It is "empty" of every thing, that God calls good. Vanity is the predominant character of the mind [n]. As the ſoul reſembles "the troubled ſea," it is covered with groſs darkneſs; with the darkneſs of ignorance, of error, and of prejudice.

What was the firſt work of God in giving form to the confuſed maſs? He created light. This is the very method of his procedure in the new creation. He makes light to enter into the benighted underſtanding.

In what manner were all things created? How did light receive its being from God? Was it not by a word of almighty power? "He ſpake, "and it was done: He ſaid, Let light be, and "light was." This mode of operation, peculiar to omnipotence, is particularly marked by the Apoſtle as characterizing the new creation. It is marked with a ſpecial reference to the old; as evidently denoting that the ſame almighty power is not leſs neceſſary in the one, than it was in the other. "God, who *commanded* the light to "ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory "of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt [o]." He not only

n Eph. iv. 18. o 2 Cor. iv. 6.

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only made light to ſhine by a word of power, but made it to ſhine "out of darkneſs." In what a lively manner does this expreſs the work of God in converſion! He ſtill ſhows that he is that God, who "calleth the things that be not as "though they were." He directs his efficacious word to the ſinner who is in groſs darkneſs, and makes him "light in the LORD." He ſays, "Look "ye blind;" and at his word they ſee.

In the firſt creation, "God divided the light "from the darkneſs." For even after the formation of light, the darkneſs was not totally diſpelled. Thus, in the Chriſtian, two contrary principles remain. But the light is ſo divided from the darkneſs, that the former can never be extinguiſhed by the latter.

Were the evening and the morning one day? So is it in the new creation. The evening, the imperfect ſtate of grace in the preſent life, a ſtate partly clear and partly dark, and the morning of glory at the reſurrection, make but one day to the renewed ſoul. The day of glory hath dawned. He is "changed from glory to glory." His preſent life, as "hid with Chriſt," is not ſubſtantially different from that which awaits him in heaven. For as he hath the Son, he hath life, even life for evermore. He, who is himſelf "the "Reſurrection," ſays; "I *give* unto them eter-"nal life."

Each Perſon of the godhead was engaged in the creation of the world. The Father created all things by the Son. The Holy Spirit "moved,"

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"moved," with an incubating power, "on the "face of the waters," communicating life. In like manner, "we are the workmanſhip of *God*, "created again in *Chriſt Jeſus*. It is the Spirit "that quickeneth. Except a man be born of the "Spirit, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God."

Was man created by God in his image, after his likeneſs? The ſame work is performed, the ſame power is neceſſary, in the new creation. For "the new man is renewed in knowledge, after "the image of him that created him [p]."

II. This neceſſity alſo appears from the *inefficacy* of the ſevereſt *judgments*, that have ever been inflicted on men, with reſpect to any real change. Could any diſpenſation towards mankind be more awful, or in more expreſſive characters declare the hatefulneſs of ſin, than the univerſal *deluge*? Yet ſo obdurate was the heart of Ham, that ſcarcely were the waters of deſtruction dried up, ere he "made a mock at ſin," and conſidered that inſtance of human imperfection as matter of profane ſport, which ſhould have covered him with bluſhes [q]. How great, and how general was the corruption of the poſterity of Noah, even during his own life! He might have ſeen Terah, the father of Abraham; and we may believe that he ſtill retained the character of "a "preacher of righteouſneſs," and continued to remind his deſcendants of the procuring cauſe of the

p Col. iii. 10. Vid. Witſ. Oecon. p. 640.

q Gen. ix. 22.

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the deluge. Yet before his deceaſe, many of them had apoſtatized from the true God.

It deſerves our particular attention indeed, that what in one place is given as the reaſon of the deluge, is in another given as the reaſon why there ſhould never be a ſecond deſtruction of a ſimilar kind. "God ſaw that the wickedneſs "of man was great in the earth, and that every "imagination of the thoughts of his heart was "only evil continually.—And the LORD ſaid, I "will deſtroy man, whom I have created.—I will "deſtroy them with the earth[r]." After the deluge, "the LORD ſaid in his heart, I will not "again curſe the ground any more for man's "ſake; for the imagination of man's heart is "evil from his youth[s]." Shall it be imagined, that the Spirit of revelation can contradict himſelf? Or that He, who "is of one mind," ſhould be "turned" to another? Or, that God tried this deſtruction as an experiment, and determined never to try it again, becauſe it did not anſwer his purpoſe? Far be ſuch thoughts from us, as derogatory in the higheſt degree from the perfection of the only wiſe God! Whence, then, is the ſame thing mentioned as the reaſon of modes of procedure diametrically oppoſite? This ſtriking connexion, which might at firſt view appear as a contradiction, lets us know, that God had a twofold deſign in the deluge; that while he was pleaſed thus to manifeſt his deteſtation of ſin, it was at the ſame time his pleaſure to ſhew that

r Gen. vi. 5. 7. 13. s Gen. viii. 21.

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the moſt tremendous judgments cannot change the heart of rebellious man. To declare what ſin deſerves, he calls for a deluge; and to proclaim the incorrigible nature of the diſeaſe, he promiſes a future exemption from this judgment.

The ſhocking impurity of the daughters of Lot may be viewed as an illuſtration of the ſame truth. Some writers have endeavoured to extenuate their guilt, by ſuppoſing that they might reckon the race of men extinct, in conſequence of that deſtruction from which they had eſcaped: or, that they were actuated by an earneſt deſire, and perhaps by hope, that the one or other of them might be the mother of the promiſed ſeed. But their conduct undoubtedly ſhows, how little they were affected by the deſtruction of the cities of the plain. For they were not deterred, even by this awful judgment, from the commiſſion of a crime, which, as being againſt nature, partook of the general character of that by which their former fellow-citizens were marked out as monuments of divine vengeance.

Here I might alſo mention the obſtinacy of Iſrael in rebellion, both in the wilderneſs, and in the land of promiſe, notwithſtanding the many and awful judgments executed on them. This is illuſtrated in a very ſtriking manner, in the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel. Let us for a moment advert to what has been formerly mentioned. Two hundred and fifty princes, who intruded themſelves into the office of the prieſthood, had been

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been deſtroyed by "fire from the LORD;" the earth had opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up the company of Korah: yet "*on the morrow* all "the congregation of Iſrael murmured againſt "Moſes and Aaron," and were "gathered againſt "them," with this impious language in their mouths; "Ye have killed the people of the LORD." While they accuſe Moſes and Aaron of ſacrilegious murder, they mean to accuſe God himſelf, as if he had acted a cruel and unjuſt part towards his faithful people. Can any thing more impreſſively declare the dreadful obſtinacy of man, in rebellion againſt God, when left to the ways of his own heart; or the inſufficiency of any outward means to reclaim him?

III. The neceſſity of an efficacious operation on the heart, may alſo be illuſtrated from the hiſtory of the *promiſed ſeed*. God had not only promiſed to Abraham, that he ſhould have a ſon, but ſworn that "in his ſeed all the families of the "earth ſhould be bleſſed." Abraham waited long for the completion of the promiſe; ſtill expecting it according to the courſe of nature. But it was twenty-five years after the promiſe was firſt made, ere it was accompliſhed[t]. God was pleaſed to exerciſe the faith and patience of the Patriarch, till all hope of his being a father, according to the ordinary courſe of nature, was gone. He had a ſon, indeed, born to him while he was yet in his ſtrength. But he was informed

[t] Gen. xii. 4.; xxi. 5.

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that this was not the promiſed child, but that in Iſaac his ſeed ſhould be called. Well might his ſon be deſigned "the child of promiſe;" not only as his birth was matter of promiſe long before it took place, and as the bleſſing was to deſcend in the line of his poſterity, he being the deſtined progenitor of the ſeed of the woman; but eſpecially becauſe he was born, not according to the common courſe of nature, but by virtue of the promiſe. "He who was of the bond-woman was "born *after the fleſh;* but he of the free-woman "was *of promiſe.* Which things are an alle-"gory[u]." "Againſt hope," Abraham is called to "believe in hope." Nature muſt be dead, and evidently appear to be ſo; that the power may be known to proceed wholly from Him "who "quickneth the dead." For nature can contribute nothing to grace.

Abraham received the promiſe concerning Iſaac before he was circumciſed. But it was not fulfilled, till he had ſubmitted to this humiliating rite[v]. As this ſignified the circumciſion of the heart, or the renovation of our nature, the connexion ſhews that all ſpiritual bleſſings proceed from ſovereign grace, and become ours only by the operation of almighty power. The promiſed bleſſing was received by the patriarch, only as ſymbolically "putting off the old man;" whereas Iſhmael had been born to him while he was yet uncircumciſed. For temporal bleſſings are conferred even on carnal men: but it is only as

[u] Gal. iv. 23, 24. [v] Gen. xvii. 10. 27.

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us being made new creatures, that we can enjoy thoſe which are ſpiritual.

In like manner, Iſaac, the child of promiſe, lived twenty years in wedlock before he was a father. Rebekah his wife was barren; and it was only in anſwer to prayer that this natural obſtacle to the fulfilment of the promiſe was removed [w]. The faith of Iſaac, of whom the Meſſiah was to ſpring, was thus tried nearly as long as that of Abraham, and in a ſimilar way, ere the bleſſing was given.

IV. The neceſſity of almighty power to give efficacy to the goſpel, is illuſtrated by the nature of many of the *victories* obtained by God's ancient people. Jericho, the key of Canaan in its ſtate of idolatry, may be viewed as a ſtriking emblem of the kingdom of Satan. But it was ſubdued by Joſhua, whoſe name by interpretation is Jeſus. Was it by force of arms? We may well ſuppoſe that the many thouſands of Iſrael were able, by human means, to have conquered this ſingle city. It was, however, the pleaſure of God to give them victory in another way. He ſaid to Joſhua; "See, *I have given* into thine hand Jericho, "and the king thereof, and the mighty men "of valour." But the Iſraelites were to employ no ordinary means of warfare. No forts were to be erected, no battering-rams to be employed againſt the city. Not a hand was to be lifted up to make a breach in its walls, or to cut

w Gen. xxv. 20, 21. 26.

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off thoſe who defended them. Their victory was to proceed from the ark of the covenant, which "compaſſed the city." The only actual warriors were prieſts, blowing trumpets. For ſix days ſucceſſively were the men of war thus to encompaſs Jericho, once every day. On the ſeventh, in the ſame manner were they to go round it ſeven times. Then, when the prieſts blew with the trumpets, and the people "ſhouted with a great "ſhout, the wall fell down flat" on every ſide.

Nothing could in a more lively manner repreſent the nature of the conqueſts of our Joſhua. The preaching of the word is in itſelf as inadequate for ſubduing the hearts of ſinners, as the blowing of horns could be for overthrowing the walls of Jericho. They had other trumpets, of ſilver; but thoſe of horn, called cornets, were to be uſed on this occaſion, as they were alſo uſed in proclaiming the jubilee; and they were the moſt proper emblem of the meanneſs of the inſtruments God is pleaſed to employ in the goſpel, in proclaiming the acceptable year of the LORD, and liberty to the captive. The Iſraelites muſt ſtrictly obſerve the orders given to Joſhua, patiently waiting the time appointed by God for the downfal of the walls of Jericho. Although expoſed to the bitter taunts of the heathen inhabitants, as to the ſuppoſed inutility of their ſolemn proceſſion, they muſt have recourſe to no unhallowed means. In this are they emblems of the patience to be exerciſed by the ſervants of Chriſt, in the continued uſe of the very ſame means, how unproductive

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productive ſoever they may appear. They muſt "in all things approve themſelves as the miniſters "of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in ne-"ceſſities, in diſtreſſes [x]." Thus ſaith the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles; "Being reviled, we "bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being "defamed, we entreat [y]." When God's appointed time is come, his word ſhall not return unto him void. One would think that this ſame inſpired writer, when deſcribing the efficacy of the goſpel, expreſsly alluded to the falling of the high *walls* of Jericho at the ſounding of horns. "Though we walk in the fleſh," he ſays, "we "do not war after the fleſh: (for the weapons "of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty "through God to the pulling down of ſtrong-"holds;) *caſting down* imaginations," or reaſonings, "and every *high thing* that *exalteth* itſelf "againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing "into captivity every thought to the obedience "of Chriſt [z]."

We have a ſimilar inſtance, in the hiſtory of the deliverance of Iſrael by Gideon. His family was poor in Manaſſeh, and he was the leaſt in his father's houſe [a]. Therefore he is emblematically repreſented as "a cake of barley-bread;" and as in himſelf not leſs unfit to work ſo great a ſalvation, than a barley-cake could be to overturn a tent [b]. A look from JEVOVAH communicated to him all the might that he had; and a gracious

x 2 Cor. vi. 4. y 1 Cor iv. 13, 14. z 2 Cor. x. 3.—5.
a Judg. vi. 15. b Judg. vii. 13, 14.

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word enſured him of all the ſucceſs he afterwards enjoyed. "The LORD *looked* upon him, and ſaid, "Go in this thy might, and thou ſhalt ſave Iſrael "from the hand of the Midianites: have not I "*ſent* thee [c]?" But his might was not to be the proper mean of the ſalvation of Iſrael. The honour of this ſalvation was not to pertain to an arm of fleſh. He had at firſt an army of thirty-two thouſand men. But the LORD ſaid to him, "The people that are with thee are *too many* for "me to give the Midianites into their hands, "leſt Iſrael vaunt themſelves againſt me, ſaying, "Mine own hand hath ſaved me." They were therefore reduced to ten thouſand. But "the LORD "ſaid to Gideon, The people are yet too many." Accordingly they were reduced to three hundred. Thoſe, to whom the honourable work of delivering Iſrael was aſſigned, are brought ſo low, as to have a dog's mark ſet on them. For thoſe only, who, in drinking of the water, "lapped, as a dog "lappeth," were choſen as the inſtruments of this deliverance [d]. The only arms with which theſe men were provided, were trumpets with pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. We have no evidence that a ſword was drawn by one of them, or that a ſingle ſword was left among all the three hundred. For that expreſſion, which was their word of war, "The ſword of the LORD and of "Gideon," is entirely metaphorical. They were to "ſtand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the "LORD their God." They were to uſe no other means

[c] Judg. vi. 14. [d] Judg. vii. 2—7.

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means of victory than to blow the trumpets, to break the pitchers, and to cry as inſtructed by their captain. They had no other weapons than—"lamps in their left hands, and trumpets in their "right hands to blow withal." But by means of theſe they obtained a complete victory over their enemies. For "the LORD ſet every man's ſword "againſt his fellow."

Here we have a moſt ſtriking repreſentation of the manner in which the enemies of Chriſt are made to fall under him. It is not by the ſword of civil power, by the force of human eloquence, or by the influence of moral ſuaſion. In general he employs not the mighty, the noble, or the wiſe in this warfare; "leſt Iſrael ſhould vaunt "themſelves." It is ſtill a cake of barley-bread, that overturns the tents of Midian. When the *trumpet* of the goſpel is blown, ſinners are awakened; and, according to the promiſe, Chriſt gives them light. Thus the apoſtle Paul, when ſpeaking of the efficacy attending the goſpel, ſays; "For God who commanded the light to ſhine out "of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, "in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. But we have this "treaſure," that is, the ineſtimable treaſure of this divine *light*, "in *earthen veſſels*, that the excellen-"cy of the power may be of God, and not of us." Poor, ſinful men, however, may engage in this work, only as receiving his commiſſion. No one can expect any ſucceſs, but in as far as the lan-

guage

e 2 Cor. iv. 5-7.

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guage of God to Gideon is applicable to him; "Have not I ſent thee?"

Shamgar, the ſon of Anath, ſlew ſix hundred Philiſtines with an ox-goad, and thus delivered Iſrael [f]. Samſon ſlew a thouſand of the ſame hoſtile nation with the jaw-bone of an aſs [g]. By means of a ſmooth ſtone out of the brook, thrown from a ſling, the ſtripling David afterwards ſlew their gigantic champion, who had defied the armies of the living God [h]. Theſe were ſtriking proofs of the contemptible character of the means which God employs, for carrying on his conqueſts in the Church, and over her enemies. The proud Philiſtine diſdained David becauſe of his youth, and was filled with indignation at the deſpicable equipment of his antagoniſt, as an inſult to his own power, and as robbing him of every ſhadow of honour in that conqueſt about which he did not entertain a ſingle doubt. "Am I a dog," ſaid he, "that thou comeſt againſt me with "ſtaves?" But David knew that all the human means he could uſe were inadequate to ſuch a victory. His confidence was therefore wholly in divine power. To Saul he ſaid, "The LORD that "delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and "out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me "out of the hand of this Philiſtine." To him alſo David ſaid, "Thou comeſt to me with a "ſword, and with a ſpear, and with a ſhield; "but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of "hoſts, the God of the armies of Iſrael, whom "thou

f Judg. iii. 31. g Judg. xv. 15. h 1 Sam. xvii. 40. 49.

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"thou haſt defied. This day the LORD will de-
"liver thee into mine hand,—that all the earth
"may know that there is a God in Iſrael. And
"all this aſſembly ſhall know that the LORD *ſa-*
"*veth not with ſword and ſpear.*" The follow-
ing reflection is made by the inſpired writer of
this hiſtory: "So David prevailed over the Phi-
"liſtine, with a ſling, and with a ſtone;—but
"there was no ſword in the hand of David [i]."
As David was an eminent type of Chriſt, the
manner in which he obtained this victory, re-
markably prefigured the conqueſts of his Son and
Lord. Did David cut off the head of Goliath
with his own ſword? Jeſus foiled Satan on the
croſs; and "by death deſtroyed him that had the
"power of death." David went forth to battle,
with a ſtaff, and with a ſtone. As Jeſus is him-
ſelf the "ſtone cut out of the mountain without
"hands [k];" the word of the goſpel is "the rod
"of his ſtrength," by which he rules in the midſt
of his enemies, and the ſtaff by means of which
he guides, ſuſtains, comforts, and protects his
people [l].

v. God taught his ancient Iſrael to have all
their *dependance* on *himſelf*. Some notice has
been taken of this in a former part of the work:
but it deſerves our particular attention here.
When they were about to enter into the promiſed
land, he put them in mind that they had no power
in

i 1 Sam. xvii. 37 45. 47. 50.
k Dan. ii. 34. 45.
l Pſal. cx. 2.; xxiii. 14.

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in themſelves to ſubdue the nations that poſſeſſed it. "Hear, O Iſrael, thou art to paſs over Jor-
"dan this day, to go in to poſſeſs nations greater
"and mightier than thyſelf, cities great and fen-
"ced up to heaven; a people great and tall, the
"children of the Anakims, whom thou knoweſt,
"and of whom thou haſt heard ſay, Who can
"ſtand before the children of Anak? Underſtand
"therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he
"which goeth over before thee as a conſuming
"fire: he ſhall deſtroy them, and he ſhall bring
"them down before thy face.—Speak not in thine
"heart, after that the LORD thy God hath caſt
"them out from before thee, ſaying, For my righ-
"teouſneſs the LORD hath brought me in to poſſeſs
"this land: but for the wickedneſs of theſe na-
"tions the LORD doth drive them out from before
"thee[m]." He in the ſtrongeſt terms expreſſes his diſpleaſure at carnal confidence: "Curſed be
"the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh
"his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the
"LORD[n]." On this account he often puniſhed his people with the greateſt ſeverity, and made the very object of their confidence the inſtrument of their deſtruction. "Wo to the rebellious chil-
"dren, ſaith the LORD,—that walk to go down
"into Egypt, (and have not aſked at my mouth),
"to ſtrengthen themſelves in the ſtrength of Pha-
"raoh, and to truſt in the ſhadow of Egypt.
"Therefore ſhall the ſtrength of Pharaoh be your
"ſhame, and the truſt in the ſhadow of Egypt
"your

m Deut. ix. 1.—4. n Jer. xvii. 5.

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" your confuſion.—They were all aſhamed of a " people that could not profit them, nor be an " help nor profit, but a ſhame, and alſo a re- " proach [o]."

Theſe warnings, denunciations and puniſhments had all a further reference. They indeed immediately reſpected the literal Iſrael; and declared their guilt in truſting in any arm, ſave that which had been ſo remarkably diſplayed in their deliverance and protection. But as the temporal ſalvations given to this people prefigured the everlaſting ſalvation of all the ſpiritual Iſrael, the means employed by God to deter them from truſting in an arm of fleſh, whether their own or that of any other nation, were ultimately and eſpecially deſigned to declare the ſin and danger of carnal confidence in any ſhape, as oppoſed to confidence in that ſalvation exhibited in the goſpel. Hence we find the language, originally appropriated to the guilt of truſting in man for temporal deliverance, transferred to the New Teſtament, and uſed to expreſs the ſtill more aggravated iniquity of ſelf-righteouſneſs, or truſt in external privileges: " We are the circumciſion, who—re- " joice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in " the fleſh [p]." Nor can we rightly read the language of the Spirit of God, on this ſubject, in the Old Teſtament, without underſtanding it as eſpecially " written for our admonition," that we may " not truſt in ourſelves, but in him that rai- " ſeth the dead."

VI. Some

[o] Iſa. xxx. 1.—5. [p] Phil. iii. 3.

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VI. Some of the circumſtances attending the rebuilding of the *temple*, after the return of the Jews from their captivity, afford a ſimilar illuſtration. The very oppoſition made by their enemies was overruled for the advancement of this work. They did every thing to inſtigate the ſupreme authority againſt that afflicted handful. But the truth of that declaration was manifeſted; "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; "and he turneth it whitherſoever he will." For "he turned the heart of the king of Aſſyria unto "them, to ſtrengthen their hands in the work of "the houſe of the LORD, the God of Iſrael[q]." Were ſome in danger of "deſpiſing the day of "ſmall things," becauſe the glory of this building was ſo far inferior to that of the former? Or, were they ready to conclude, that, becauſe of the many obſtacles thrown in their way, it would never be finiſhed? God ſent them a meſſage both of comfort and of reproof, expreſſive of the manner in which his work is conducted in every age: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, "ſaith the LORD of hoſts." Concerning Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, he delivers that gracious declaration, which could only have its full accompliſhment in the glorious Antitype: "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Ze- "rubbabel a plain, a plain! and he ſhall bring "forth the head-ſtone thereof with ſhoutings, "Grace, grace unto it[r]."

VII. In

[q] Ezra vi. 22. [r] Zech. iv. 6, 7.

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VII. In proof of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of divine power for the ſalvation of ſinners, may I not appeal to the *perſonal miniſtry* of our LORD? The great ſalvation "began to be ſpoken" by him. He "ſpake as never man ſpake." Nothing but truth proceeded from his lips. He "ſpake "the words of God." What he had "ſeen and "heard, that he teſtified[s]." His enemies were often ſilenced, and at times captivated by his diſcourſes. He confirmed his doctrines by the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles, ſuch as they could neither diſprove nor deny. Yet "no man received his "teſtimony." He had reaſon to complain, that he had "laboured in vain," and that Iſrael was "not gathered." "His own received him not." He wept over Jeruſalem, ſaying, "How often "would I have gathered thy children together, "even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her "wings, and ye would not."

What was the deſign of this, but to teach us, that human ſuaſion, even in its higheſt poſſible perfection, is unavailing? It was the will of God, that the perſonal miniſtry of Chriſt himſelf ſhould be attended with comparatively little efficacy; to illuſtrate the neceſſity of divine power, and to put honour on the miniſtration of the Spirit. According to the pleaſure of the three-one God, all the efficacy of the goſpel muſt immediately proceed from the third Perſon of the adorable Trinity. It muſt therefore appear, that the word, as ſpoken by the human lip of Jeſus himſelf, could be

[s] John iii. 31. 34.

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be effectual only in as far as it was accompanied by the power of the Spirit. The effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt was therefore withheld, till the perſonal miniſtry of Chriſt was at an end. But when the diſciples received "power from on high," a ſingle ſermon, preached by one of them, was attended with far greater ſucceſs than the whole of Chriſt's miniſtry.

Hath God in ſuch a variety of ways declared the inefficacy of means, and the neceſſity of Almighty power in order to the ſalvation of man? Let us beware of ſaying, "Mine own arm hath "ſaved me." It is evident from the whole hiſtory of the Church, that it hath ſtill been the deſign of God, in working ſalvation, to ſtain the pride of human glory. Why ſhould we ſtumble at this ſtone? If it was the pleaſure of JEHOVAH, that boaſting ſhould be excluded in all the temporal deliverances of his people; can we rationally ſuppoſe, that he will admit them to a partnerſhip with himſelf, either in the accompliſhment, or in the glory, of that ſalvation which is the chief of all his works? Would he exclude them from the mere ſign, and give them a diſtinguiſhed co-operation in the thing ſignified? Let us view the language of his ancient people, as deſcriptive of the exerciſe of all his ſpiritual Iſrael. Let us tranſfer to the heavenly Canaan, what they uttered concerning the earthly: "We got not the "land in poſſeſſion by our own ſword, neither "did our own arm ſave us: but thy right-hand,

"and

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"and thine arm, and the light of thy counte-
"nance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto us [t]."

SECTION XVI.

The Doctrine of Particular Redemption illuſtrated, from the Firſt Promiſe;—from the Temporal Redemptions of Iſrael;—from the Limitation of the legal Oblations;—from the Hiſtory of Redemption as accompliſhed by Chriſt.

THAT our Lord did not die for all mankind, but for a certain number whom the Father from eternity gave to him, is evident not only from a great variety of doctrinal teſtimonies, but from the whole hiſtory of the Church.

1. This truth is diſcernible in the very *dawn* of revelation. It is diſtinctly written in the firſt goſpel-promiſe [u]. There we have a diſtinction marked between two different ſeeds. The one is deſigned the *ſeed* of the *woman*; the other, the *ſeed* of the *ſerpent*. As Adam, after the revelation of this promiſe, called Eve "the mother of "all living," becauſe he in the exerciſe of faith viewed her as the mother of all thoſe who ſhould be made alive unto God; by the *ſeed* of the *wo-*

t Pſal. xliv. 3.

u Gen. iii. 15.

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man we are to underſtand Chriſt myſtical, Chriſt the head and all his ſpiritual ſeed conſidered as in him. Now, this ſeed is expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from that of the ſerpent. Who, then, can theſe be but the reprobate world left to periſh in their ſins? Doth God ſay, "I will put enmity "between thy ſeed and her ſeed?" This enmity, then, muſt be mutual. The teſtimony of God implies, on the one hand, that he permits the ſeed of the ſerpent to continue under the power of that natural enmity againſt Chriſt and his ſeed, which is the fruit of their original apoſtacy in Adam; and, on the other, that he actually implants a principle of enmity in the hearts of the ſeed of the woman againſt the devil and his intereſts. This he does, in communicating the gracious principle of ſupreme love to himſelf. For we cannot love God without hating Satan and his works. Enmity againſt this old ſerpent neceſſarily takes place of our natural "enmity "againſt God." Such is the ſtate of matters with reſpect to the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, and can we ſuppoſe that it is reverſed as to the Head? Does God put enmity between them and the ſeed of the ſerpent; and hath Chriſt the ſame love to them that he hath to his own ſeed? Does not the promiſe reſpect him as well as his members? How then can he be an adverſary to the ſeed of the ſerpent, and yet die for their ſalvation? In conſequence of this enmity, does Chriſt bruiſe the *head* of the ſerpent; and from the ſame principle, does he purchaſe

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purchaſe redemption for all his *ſeed?* The very contrary, ſurely. In the bruiſing of his head, we have an awful prelude of their eternal deſtruction, as adherents to his devoted intereſts, and as irreconcilable enemies to the Redeemer.

The Apoſtle Paul teaches us the ſame doctrine, when explaining the promiſe made to Abraham. "He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as "of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt[x]." Here he ſpeaks of Chriſt myſtical, as including the Head himſelf, and all his ſpiritual ſeed; who are called "the ſeed of Abraham," to what nation ſoever they belong; as being eventually made partakers of like precious faith, and intereſted in the bleſſings of that covenant which was revealed to him. But the promiſe would be to *ſeeds*, in the ſtrangeſt ſenſe conceivable; if the bleſſing promiſed, an everlaſting ſalvation, had been purchaſed for the ſeed of the ſerpent, no leſs than for the ſeed of the woman.

11. The ſame doctrine receives the fulleſt elucidation from the *temporal* redemptions of *Iſrael*. That theſe were meant as ſucceſſive figures of the ſpiritual ſalvation of the Church, is ſo evident as ſcarcely to require illuſtration. They are all exhibited as branches of his great work of mercy towards her, and as confirmations of his covenant with Abraham, which covenant had a ſpecial reſpect to ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings. "He ſent redemption unto his people, he hath

x Gal. iii. 16.

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" commanded his covenant for ever.—He remem-
" bered his holy promiſe, and Abraham his ſer-
" vant. And he brought forth his people with
" joy; and his choſen with gladneſs [y]." This is the very language uſed with reſpect to our ſalvation by Chriſt. " Bleſſed be the LORD God of
" Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his
" people:—to remember his holy covenant, the
" oath which he ſware to our father Abraham [z]." Theſe figurative redemptions were all accompliſhed by the ſame divine Perſon, who at length gave himſelf a ranſom. " The Angel of his preſence
" ſaved them." They contained a diſplay of the ſame divine and gracious characters: " In
" his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and
" he bare them, and carried them, all the days
" of old [a]." They were alſo, as ſhall be ſeen, procured in the way of purchaſe.

The redemption of Iſrael was entirely of a *particular* kind; and in this reſpect a ſhadow of our redemption by Chriſt. None but the ſeed of Jacob were partakers of this mercy. Hence David ſays; " What one nation in the earth is like
" thy people, even like Iſrael, whom God went
" to *redeem* for a people to himſelf, and to make
" him a name, and to do for you great things,
" and terrible, for thy land, before thy people
" which thou redeemedſt to thee from Egypt,
" from the nations and their gods [b]?" Similar is the language of Moſes; " Thou in thy mercy
" haſt

y Pſa. cxi. 9.; cv. 42, 43.
a Iſa. lxiii. 9.
z Luke i. 68. 72, 73.
b 2 Sam. vii. 23.

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"haſt led forth thy people which thou haſt re-
"deemed [c]."

This was wholly the fruit of *diſtinguiſhing* love. *Love* and *redemption* are terms uſed in Scripture as correlates. We never read of God's redeeming a people, even in a temporal reſpect, but as the fruit of love to them as a peculiar people: and the redemption is always limited according to the extent of this love. "Becauſe he *loved* thy "fathers, therefore—he *brought thee out* in his "ſight with his mighty power out of Egypt [d]."

This typical redemption, ſo far from being extended to others, was conferred on Iſrael at their *expence*. When he ſaved them, the nations that were in a ſtate of enmity were deſtroyed. He bought them as his peculiar people with the price of blood; and thus gave a ſtriking emblem of the means by which he ſhould, in the fulneſs of time, redeem all his choſen people. In this ſenſe is it ſaid that they were *purchaſed*; as the Iſraelites ſung with reſpect to the Egyptians: "Fear "and dread ſhall fall upon them; by the great-"neſs of thine arm they ſhall be as ſtill as a "ſtone: till thy people paſs over, O LORD, till "the people paſs over, which thou haſt purcha-"ſed [e]." To the ſame purpoſe JEHOVAH, when revealing himſelf in the character of a Saviour, reminds his peculiar people of this wonderful evidence of his love: "I am the LORD thy "God, the holy One of Iſrael, thy ſaviour;"—not the ſaviour of Egypt, but in a way of diſ-

 tinction,

c Exod. xv. 13. d Deut. iv. 37. e Exod. xv. 16.

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tinction, nay of excluſion, thy *ſaviour*. And how does he prove his claim to this character?—"I "gave Egypt for thy ranſom, Ethiopia and Seba "for thee. Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, "thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved "thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and "people for thy life." The meaning of the promiſe here added is clear from what follows: "Thus ſaith the LORD your Redeemer, the holy "One of Iſrael, For your ſake I have ſent to Ba-"bylon, and brought down all their nobles [f]." Afterwards, when he hath pointed out Cyrus by name, and particularly deſcribed the redemption to be accompliſhed by his inſtrumentality, he ſhows the ſpecial deſign of all this work, in the call given to ſinners of every nation to believe in him as a ſpiritual Redeemer: "Look unto me, "and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth [g]."

So clearly was the character of redemption impreſſed on the whole of God's conduct towards the Iſraelites, that it does not merely diſtinguiſh the termination of their controverſy with the Egyptians at the Red Sea, but the preceding events. Every plague, which was inflicted upon Egypt, in the limitation aſſigned to it, marked out the Iſraelites as a peculiar people. Thus where we read, with reſpect to the flies, "I will put a di-"viſion," the expreſſion literally ſignifies; "I "will put a *redemption* between my people and "thy people [h]."

This

f Iſa. xliii. 3, 4. 14. g Iſa. xlv. 22. h Exod. viii. 23.

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This was remarkably the caſe as to the deſtruction of the firſt-born. When the LORD ſmote all the firſt-born of the Egyptians, he delivered the houſes of the Iſraelites. But in order to this deliverance, it was neceſſary that they ſhould be typically redeemed by the blood of the paſchal lamb: "When he ſeeth the blood, the LORD "will paſs over the door, and will not ſuffer the "deſtroyer to come in unto your houſes to ſmite "you." What an awful diſtinction was here made! "He *ſmote* the Egyptians, and *deliver*-"*ed* our houſes [i]." Ever after, the Iſraelites were to redeem their firſt-born by paying a price for them: "All the firſt-born of man among thy "children ſhalt thou redeem." Therefore they are ſaid to be all ſanctified unto the LORD [k].

Both this temporal deliverance, and the ordinances commemorating it, undoubtedly prefigured the eternal redemption of the ſeed of Chriſt, by the ineſtimable price of his blood, "as of a "lamb without blemiſh." Hence they are denominated "the church of the firſt-born." Like thoſe of Iſrael, they are a ſelect company, whom the Lord hath ſet apart for himſelf.

III. This is alſo evident from the *limitation* of the legal *oblations*. I do not ſpeak of thoſe which were preſented in the name of individuals, but of ſuch as reſpected the whole congregation of Iſrael. Of this nature were the morning and evening ſacrifices, thoſe which were offered on the great day

i Exod. xii. 23. 27. k Exod. xiii. 2. 13.

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of atonement, and a variety of others. None, who believe the doctrine of Chriſt's atonement, deny that theſe were inſtituted types of his death as the true ſacrifice for ſin. But none can conſiſtently acknowledge this, and yet affirm that he died for all men. For all theſe typical oblations, while made for the whole congregation of Iſrael, were made for them only. Theſe ſacrifices were offered up for all Iſrael; but only as prefiguring the efficacy of the death of Chriſt, as extending to all the choſen people which conſtitute the true Iſrael. The ſtrangers, who received any benefit from the legal oblations, were ſuch only as clave to the Iſraelites. The ſacrifices had no reſpect to the nations around. They were expreſsly excluded from the congregation of the LORD. Now, if theſe ſacrifices prefigured the atonement to be made by Chriſt, if at the ſame time they were limited to the congregation of Iſrael; his expiation muſt alſo be limited as to its objects, elſe there is no conſonancy between the ſhadow and the ſubſtance.

IV. The ſame thing might be fully demonſtrated from the hiſtory of *redemption* as accompliſhed by *Chriſt*. From the account that himſelf gives of the intention of his death, it is clear that he did not die for all. He ſaid, "I lay down my "life for the ſheep." Theſe are evidently a definite number, ſeparated from the reſt of mankind. For he diſtinguiſhes them, in the deſcription given, from wolves and hirelings, and from others

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others to whom he ſays, "Ye are not of my "ſheep." He aſſigns it as one proof of his being the good Shepherd, that he *knows* his ſheep [l]. Now, if by theſe he meant all mankind, why were they thus diſtinguiſhed, or what merit was there in knowing them, when there could be no miſtake, unleſs devils had been miſtaken for men. The extent of his death is ſo clearly defined in his interceſſory prayer, that it ſeems inconceivable that any one ſhould err on this ſubject, without obſtinately rejecting the light. Although Jeſus had power over all fleſh, yet it was to be exerciſed in conferring eternal life on thoſe only whom the Father had given him. For ſuch only did he pray, in contradiſtinction from the world. For them only did he ſet himſelf apart as a ſacrifice, and conſecrate himſelf by his ſufferings to the work of an interceding High-prieſt [m].—But on theſe things I enlarge not; as they have been often fully illuſtrated by others, who have written profeſſedly on this ſubject.

From the obſervations made, we may perceive how intimately the various branches of the ſyſtem of error are connected. Deiſts and Arminians in fact ſtumble on one ſtone. The former ridicule the Scriptures, and deny that they are a divine revelation, becauſe they repreſent God as limiting his love to one nation, to the excluſion of all the reſt of the world. The latter reject the very ſame doctrine in another form, not indeed as reſpecting any particular nation, but in reference to

l John x. 12.—15. 26. 27.

m Chap. xvii. 2. 9. 19.

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to particular perſons. The Deiſt ſtumbles at the doctrine of the literal, the Arminian at that of the ſpiritual, Iſrael. Both are ſhocked at the idea of divine ſovereignty, and deny that God hath a right to do with his own what ſeemeth him good.

SECTION XVII.

The Conſervation of Believers illuſtrated, from the Hiſtory of Iſrael.—The Perpetuity of God's Love to the Seed of Jacob.—His Faithfulneſs.—The Stability of his Covenant.—His Love to David.—Iſrael united to God, as a Peculiar People.—A Precious Seed ſtill preſerved among them.—The Spirit given to them.—Iſrael ſaved at the Interceſſion of his Servants.—Preſerved by a conſtant Exerciſe of Almighty Power, by the Hand of the Angel promiſed as their Leader.

THE doctrine of the preſervation of all believers, in a ſtate of grace, is moſt clearly taught in the word of God, affords the moſt abundant ground of conſolation, and will furniſh all who truly underſtand it with the moſt powerful excitement to duty. This precious truth has been a thouſand times illuſtrated from a variety of doctrinal

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trinal paſſages of Scripture. It has been ſhown that all real Chriſtians are ſecured in their gracious ſtate, by virtue of the everlaſting and ſovereign love of God, by his faithfulneſs, by the immutability of his covenant, by the merit of the Redeemer, by their union to him, and to the Father in him, by the incorruptible ſeed of the word remaining in them, by the inhabitation of his Spirit, by the interceſſion of Chriſt, and as kept by almighty power. It is unneceſſary, and it would be a deviation from the deſign of this work, to attempt an illuſtration of theſe arguments in a doctrinal manner. But it is worthy of particular attention, that the Spirit of inſpiration, even in the hiſtorical parts of Scripture, ſupplies us with illuſtrations preciſely of the ſame kind; only adapted to the peculiar circumſtances of God's ancient people. Now, as we have formerly ſeen, that they prefigured the true Iſrael; their hiſtory, in this reſpect, is undoubtedly meant for the confirmation of our faith.

1. The perpetuity of God's *love* is aſſigned as the reaſon why he would not forſake the ſeed of Jacob, notwithſtanding their iniquities. The ſovereignty of this love alſo beams forth with diſtinguiſhed luſtre, in his conduct towards them. Both theſe characters are clearly expreſſed in the meſſage delivered by the prophet Jeremiah; "Thus ſaith the LORD, The people which were "left of the ſword found grace in the wilderneſs, "even Iſrael, when I went to cauſe him to reſt.

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"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee [n]." That same sovereignty of love, which was at first displayed in the choice of this "nation not desirable [o]," was conspicuous in their continued preservation, although they were still provoking the God of their mercy. How lively a figure of the permanent manifestation of the same adorable character towards all his spiritual Israel! It is only because he "rests in his love," and because this love still triumphantly overlooks our continued demerit, that he does not destroy us.

The Israelites are taught to ascribe their redemption from Egypt, not merely in general, but in all the several steps of it, to sovereign grace. The frequent repetitions, in the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, are by no means "vain repetitions." This is the principal note in their anthem of praise; "For his mercy endureth for ever." For it is not so much the design of God, that his people should commemorate the deliverance itself, as the cause of it. Without this, he hath no glory; men view even his greatest works only in a selfish light, as subservient to their interest, not as displaying his adorable perfections. In this psalm, his mercy is celebrated in those things in which it may appear there was no mercy; in overthrowing Pharaoh and his host, in destroying Sihon and Og. But as his mercy was displayed towards Israel

n Jer. xxxi. 2, 3. o Zeph. ii. 1.

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rael in the literal deliverance; it ſhadowed forth his ſpecial mercy towards his redeemed people, in the deſtruction of all their ſpiritual enemies, that they may "ſerve him without fear."

But they were not only to celebrate his ſovereign mercy in the various ſteps of one deliverance; they were to aſcribe all their deliverances to the ſame cauſe. As we have already ſeen, they needed a perpetual diſplay of the ſame unmerited love [p].

II. Is the *faithfulneſs* of God to his promiſe another ground of ſecurity to his people? Similar was the diſplay of his faithfulneſs to the typical Iſrael. They dealt unfaithfully towards him. But without conſidering their guilt as an obſtacle to the manifeſtation of his grace, he "remembered "ed his holy promiſe [q]." Thus had they reaſon to teſtify, after long experience; "There hath "not failed one word of all his good promiſe "which he promiſed by the hand of Moſes his "ſervant [r]."

God would not ſuffer Balaam to curſe Iſrael, notwithſtanding all his ſacrifices; nor would he himſelf curſe them, notwithſtanding all the devices employed by that wicked prophet to ſubject them to divine indignation, by ſeducing them to ſin. He was forced to exclaim; "Surely there "is no inchantment againſt Jacob, neither is "there any divination againſt Iſrael [s]." Long after

p Numb. xiv. 19. q Pſal. cv. 42. r 1 Kings viii. 56.
s Numb. xxiii. 23.

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after this event, the LORD reminds Iſrael of it, that they might be convinced of the rectitude of his conduct, and of his faithfulneſs towards them: "O my people, remember now what Balak king "of Moab conſulted, and what Balaam the ſon of "Beor anſwered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, "that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the "LORD[t]." On this part of their hiſtory, Moſes makes the following reflection: "The LORD thy "God would not hearken to Balaam: but the "LORD thy God turned the curſe into a bleſſing "unto thee, becauſe the LORD thy God loved "thee[u]." And is it not thus that he ſtill deals with his true Iſrael? Satan, like his ſervant Balaam, tempts the ſaints to ſin, accuſes them to God, and exerts himſelf to the utmoſt to prevail with God to curſe them, by breaking his gracious promiſe. But their loving father overrules the temptations of this adverſary, and even their falls, for their good. By theſe he teaches them watchfulneſs, humility and dependence on himſelf. He increaſes their ſtock of Chriſtian experience: and thus, in various reſpects, "turns the curſe into a "bleſſing."

III. The ſtability of the *covenant* was another ground of the ſecurity of Iſrael. When God deſcribes them as "pining away in their ini-"quity in their enemies lands," he adds; "If "they ſhall confeſs their iniquity,—then will I "remember my covenant with Jacob, and alſo "my

t Micah vi. 5. u Deut. xxiii. 5.

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" my covenant with Iſaac, and alſo my covenant " with Abraham will I remember; and I will " remember the land. The land alſo ſhall be left " of them, and ſhall enjoy her Sabbaths, while " ſhe lieth deſolate without them: and they ſhall " accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity; be- " cauſe, even becauſe they deſpiſed my judg- " ments, and becauſe their ſoul abhorred my ſta- " tutes. And yet for all that, when they be in " the land of their enemies, I will not caſt them " away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy " them utterly, and to break my covenant with " them: for I am the LORD their God [v]." Thus we perceive, that the ſevereſt viſitations of the Jews, even that of their captivity in Babylon, were within the compaſs of the everlaſting covenant; not meant for diſannulling this, but in ſubſerviency to it. Even when he remembered the land, ſo as to cauſe it to enjoy thoſe ſabbatical years which had been neglected through the diſobedience of his people, he at the ſame time remembered his covenant with them, overruling their adverſities for their good. The covenant he remembered, being that made with Abraham, was, as to its principal ſubſtance, the ſame covenant of grace made in Chriſt with all the ſpiritual Iſrael. Hence the rod, with which he ſmote them, was the chaſtening of ſons.

That covenant of royalty, which God made with David, was an illuſtrious type of the covenant of grace. It was indeed one ſpecial medium of

[v] Lev. xxvi. 39.—44.

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of the adminiſtration of this covenant under the Old Teſtament; and eminently ſubſervient to the more ſpiritual and glorious adminiſtration of it under the New. In this covenant of royalty, God graciouſly engaged to his ſervant, that he ſhould never want a man to ſit on his throne. This covenant he confirmed by his oath: "Once have I "ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto "David. His ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his "throne as the ſun before me [w]." In reference to Solomon it is ſaid: "I will be his father, and "he ſhall be my ſon." Even his great apoſtacy was not to deprive him of this parental love, as God declared to David: "If he commit iniquity, "I will chaſten him with the rod of men, and with "the ſtripes of the children of men; but my "mercy ſhall not depart away from him, as I "took it from Saul, whom I put away before "thee [x]."

Theſe two princes, Saul and David, appear as emblems of the firſt, and of the laſt Adam. The characters of the legal, and of the evangelical covenant, are illuſtrated by their hiſtory. Saul was acceptable to Iſrael, as pleaſing the carnal eye [y], but not approved of God; David was choſen of Him, but deſpiſed by the people, who were ſubjected to him only in conſequence of the diſplay of his power, and the reduction of the houſe of Saul. The kingdom was loſt to Saul, and to his poſterity, on account of one act of diſobedience; and ſo completely loſt, that there was no poſſibility

w Pſal. lxxxix. 35, 36. x 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. y 1 Sam. x. 23, 24.

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lity of reſtoration [z]. The reduction of the power of this family, however, was gradual, and the reſult of many ſtruggles. "There was long war "between the houſe of Saul, and the houſe "of David: but David waxed ſtronger and "ſtronger, and the houſe of Saul waxed weaker "and weaker [a]." When David was eſtabliſhed in the kingdom, none of the family of Saul could partake of any favour, but as holding of him, and as debtors to his bounty.

Is it not thus as to the two covenants? We naturally prefer ſalvation by works. The idea pleaſes the pride of our hearts. But we are unwilling to ſay; "Thine are we, O David!" We will never ſincerely utter this language, till the power of the law as a covenant be broken, till we be looſed from its yoke, and learn, by the light of the Spirit, that Jeſus is He of whom the Father hath ſaid; "By the hand of my ſervant David I "will ſave my people Iſrael,—out of the hand of "all their enemies [b]."—"By *one* offence many "were made ſinners." The way of ſalvation by the covenant of works is for ever barred. God eternally rejected the firſt Adam as a head of life to his poſterity. The ſecond Adam indeed could not fail. But his ſeed are chargeable with manifold iniquities. His mercy, however, departs not from them, as it was taken from the firſt Adam, according to the tenor of the covenant of works. The calamities of all who continue the ſeed of the firſt Adam, like thoſe of the poſterity of Saul,

[z] 1 Sam. xv. 23. [a] 2 Sam. iii. 1. [b] Ver. 18.

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are penal. But behold the character of the new covenant in the afflictions of the family of David: "I will viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and "their iniquity with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my "loving-kindneſs will I not *utterly* take from "him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail. My co-"venant will I not break, nor alter the thing that "is gone out of my lips [c]." What could be the deſign of this, but to ſhew the ſtability of the covenant of grace, and to declare in the livelieſt manner, by pattern, that he would not *utterly* forſake any who belong to it, or ſuffer them to fall totally or finally away from him? Hence the bleſſings of this covenant, as purchaſed by the death, and confirmed by the reſurrection of Chriſt, are all deſigned "the ſure mercies of David [d]."

None of the poſterity of the firſt Adam can have life, as holding of him. They can receive it only by a new tenure, as becoming the ſeed of the ſecond Adam; as being abſolute debtors to his mercy; like Mephiboſheth, "eating bread al-"ways at his table [e]." But in the ſoul of the Chriſtian there are ſtill two oppoſite intereſts. "What will ye ſee in the Shulamite? as it were "the company of two armies [f]?" The advancement of grace is often very ſlow, ſometimes imperceptible; but its final victory is certain. The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. There are many hard combats: but the houſe of David ſhall wax ſtronger

c Pſal. lxxxix. 32.—34.
d Iſa. lv. 3.; Acts xiii. 34.
e 2 Sam. ix. 10.
f Song vi. 13.

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ſtronger and ſtronger, while that of Saul becomes weaker and weaker.

The Spirit of inſpiration frequently marks a very important diſtinction between the conduct of God towards the houſe of Iſrael, conſiſting of the ten tribes which revolted from the family of David, and that towards the houſe of Judah. In the courſe of two hundred and fifty-four years, the throne of the ten tribes had paſſed through nine different families. Various kinds of carnal policy were employed by Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat; as the change of religion, of the place of ſacrifice, and of the prieſthood. Theſe ſucceeded ſo far as to keep the ten tribes from returning to the dominion of the houſe of David; but they could not ſecure the ſucceſſion in any one family. Nor could all the cruelties exerciſed by Jehu and others, towards the ſeed-royal, give any greater ſecurity. During this period, the family of David, without any interruption, poſſeſſed the kingdom of Judah. Not till an hundred and thirty-four years after the deſtruction of the kingdom of Iſrael, were the Jews carried captive to Babylon. Even in Babylon, the royal authority was not entirely taken away from the houſe of David. After ſeventy years, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with a few adherents from the remains of the ten tribes, were allowed to return to Paleſtine, and to enjoy a government of their own. Although this government differed in its form from that which preceded the captivity, the ſupreme authority ſtill continued in the family of David.

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Nor was it entirely withdrawn from this family, till about the time of our Saviour's appearance; when it was neceſſary that the prophecy of Jacob ſhould be fulfilled. The ſceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh came.

Did we view things with the carnal eye, it would appear ſurpriſing, and indeed unaccountable, that the throne of Judah ſhould be more ſtable than that of Ephraim. The former had far leſs extent of territory than the latter. It could bear no compariſon as to the number of ſubjects. Of conſequence, its temporal reſources were greatly inferior. Shall we conclude, therefore, that the kingdom of Judah was preſerved becauſe of the ſuperior worth of the princes, or piety of the people? Such a concluſion would be entirely contrary to the hiſtory given in the ſacred records. If we compare the character of Judah with that of the ten tribes, when the latter were carried captive, we will diſcern no ground of preference. Yet the Iſraelites were deprived of their national character; while the Jews were preſerved. The former were carried into a captivity from which they have never yet returned; but the captivity of the latter continued only for ſeventy years. Both are ſaid to be caſt out of his ſight. But the rejection of the ten tribes was penal, that of the Jews merely corrective. The one was total, the other only temporary. Of the Iſraelites it is ſaid; "They left "all the commandments of the LORD their God, "and

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" and made them molten images, even two calves,
" and made a grove, and worſhipped all the hoſt
" of heaven, and ſerved Baal. And they cauſed
" their ſons and their daughters to paſs through
" the fire, and uſed divination and inchantment,
" and ſold themſelves to do evil in the ſight of
" the LORD, to provoke him to anger. There-
" fore the LORD was very angry with Iſrael, and
" removed them out of his ſight, there was *none*
" *left but the tribe of Judah only.* And Judah
" kept not the commandments of the LORD their
" God, but *walked in the ſtatutes of Iſrael* which
" they made. And the LORD *rejected all the ſeed*
" *of Iſrael,* and afflicted them, and delivered them
" into the hand of ſpoilers, until he had caſt them
" out of his ſight g." It was in the reign of Ho-
ſhea that the Iſraelites were carried captive. Contemporary with him was Ahaz king of Judah. Now, obſerve his character. " He walked in the
" ways of the kings of Iſrael, and made alſo
" molten images for Baalim. Moreover, he burnt
" incenſe in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, and
" burnt his children in the fire, after the abomi-
" nations of the heathen whom the LORD had
" caſt out before the children of Iſrael. He ſa-
" crificed alſo, and burnt incenſe on the high
" places, and on the hills, and under every green
" tree." But although the LORD chaſtiſed the Jews, by ſuffering many of them to be taken captive by the Iſraelites, he immediately delivered them from this captivity; while he gave up their

g 2 Kings xvii. 16.—20.

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ſpoilers to a perpetual deſolation [h]. If there was any preference between theſe guilty nations, it belonged to the ten tribes: becauſe, inſtead of being warned by their awful fate, the Jews continued in the ſame wicked courſe; or when they profeſſed to repent, did it hypocritically. "I "ſaw," ſaith God, "when for all the cauſes "whereby backſliding Iſrael committed adul-"tery, I had put her away, and given her a bill "of divorce: yet her treacherous ſiſter feared "not, but went and played the harlot alſo.—Yet "for all this her treacherous ſiſter Judah hath "not turned unto me with her whole heart, but "feignedly, ſaith the LORD. And the LORD ſaid "unto me, The backſliding Iſrael hath juſtified "herſelf more than treacherous Judah [i]."

There is thus no room left to ſuppoſe, that God rejected the ten tribes becauſe of their apoſtacy, and retained that of Judah, as faithfully adhering to him. Both apoſtatized; and Judah is repreſented as the moſt guilty of the two. What reaſon then can we aſſign for the difference of their fate? God was pleaſed to diſplay his own ſovereignty. "He *refuſed* the tabernacle of Jo-"ſeph, and *choſe not* the tribe of Ephraim: but "*choſe* the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which "he loved [k]." As little are we to imagine that he left the Iſraelites, becauſe they refuſed to return to his ordinances; and preſerved the Jews, becauſe they obeyed his voice in forſaking their courſes

h 2 Chron. xxviii. 2.—15.
i Jer. iii. 8.—11.
k Pſal. lxxviii. 67, 68.

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courſes of apoſtacy. For we have ſeen that Judah turned only *feignedly*. He could juſt as eaſily have retained the ten tribes in adherence to his worſhip, or recovered them from their apoſtacy, as he did the Jews. But he would make it evident that the preſervation of his ordinances proceeded ſolely from himſelf; and that the ſafety of Judah depended on his immutable covenant; whereas the kingdom of Ephraim had no ſuch ſecurity. "Jehoram walked in the way of "the kings of Iſrael, like as did the houſe of A-"hab.—Howbeit the LORD *would* not deſtroy the "houſe of David, becauſe of the covenant that "he had made with David, and as he promi-"ſed to give a light to him and to his ſons for "ever [1]."

We have thus a remarkable figure of the difference of the divine conduct towards thoſe who make the ſame profeſſion. He ſuffers ſome to "draw back to perdition," while he preſerves others, or reclaims them from many partial apoſtacies, although in themſelves no better than the former. He ſhews that it is He only who "ma-"keth to differ." The light of one he permits to be extinguiſhed; that of another he makes to "ſhine more and more unto a perfect day." He hath been pleaſed to leave the one under the power of the old covenant. The other hath been brought into the bond of the new; and notwithſtanding daily departures, and ſometimes

[1] 2 Chron. xxi. 6, 7.

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of a very heinous nature, he "remembers his "holy covenant."

He afflicts them for their iniquities; but it is in meaſure. "Hath he ſmitten him, as he ſmote "thoſe that ſmote him? or is he ſlain according "to the ſlaughter of thoſe that are ſlain by him? "In meaſure when it ſhooteth forth, thou wilt "debate with it: he ſtayeth his rough wind in "the day of the eaſt-wind. By this, therefore, "ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this "is all the fruit to take away his ſin [m]." No period is limited in the threatenings of the deſolations of Ephraim. But as Tyre was to be "for-"gotten ſeventy years, *according to the days of* "*one king* [n]," God would ſuffer Judah to be afflicted only for the ſame period, that is, during the ordinary term of the life of a man, the days of whoſe years are threeſcore years and ten [o]: as if he would give us an emblem of the afflictions of his own children, which continue only during this preſent life, in which they receive all their "evil things [p]," whereas the puniſhment of others is eternal.

IV. The Lord continued his kindneſs to Judah, for *David's ſake.* It is generally allowed, that he was the moſt illuſtrious perſonal type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is often expreſsly called by his name [q]; and in this reſpect he eminently prefigured him, that, after his death, many

m Iſa. xxvii. 7.—9. n Iſa. xxiii. 15. o Pſal. xc. 10.
p Luke xvi. 25. q Jer. xxx. 9.; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.; xxxvii. 24.—28.; Hoſ. iii. 5.

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ny ſignal mercies were conferred on his kingdom for his ſake. On this account God would not utterly cut off the tribe of Judah, nor even dethrone his poſterity, notwithſtanding their wickedneſs. Solomon was chargeable with great apoſtacy. But the LORD would not deprive him of any part of the kingdom, nor his ſon of the whole, "for David his ſervant's ſake [r]." Abijam, one of his deſcendants, was a wicked king. "Nevertheleſs, for David's ſake did the LORD his "God give him a lamp in Jeruſalem, to ſet up "his ſon after him, and to eſtabliſh Jeruſalem: "becauſe David did that which was right in the "eyes of the LORD, and turned not aſide from "any thing that he commanded him all the days "of his life, ſave only in the matter of Uriah "the Hittite [s]." Joram "walked in the way of "the kings of Iſrael, as did the houſe of Ahab. "—Yet the LORD would not deſtroy Judah for "David his ſervant's ſake [t]."

God had reſpect to the obedience and ſufferings of this man "after his own heart." He allowed his people to uſe this as their plea: "LORD, "remember David and all his afflictions. For "thy ſervant David's ſake, turn not away the "face of thine anointed." Nor was their plea rejected. This was his gracious anſwer; "There "will I make the horn of David to bud: I have "ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His ene"mies will I clothe with ſhame: but upon him"ſelf

r 1 Kings xi. 12, 13. 32. 34.
s 1 Kings xv. 1.—5.
t 2 Kings viii. 18, 19.

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" ſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh [u]."—" My mercy " will I keep for him for evermore, and my co- " venant ſhall ſtand faſt with him. His ſeed al- " ſo will I make to endure for ever, and his throne " as the days of heaven [v]."

David at times ſeems to plead his own merit, and to ſpeak in language inconſiſtent with that ſenſe of unworthineſs which he elſewhere expreſſes, and which always becomes a tranſgreſſor. One while we find him ſaying, " The LORD re- " warded me according to my righteouſneſs, ac- " cording to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he " recompenſed me [w]." At another time he ſpeaks very differently; " Enter not into judgment with " thy ſervant: for in thy ſight ſhall no man li- " ving be juſtified [x]." Did the royal prophet contradict himſelf? No, ſurely. But in the latter paſſage, he ſpeaks properly in his own perſon, as a ſinful man. In the former, he perſonates the juſt One, whoſe " word was in his tongue."

As God promiſed that he would not deſtroy Judah for David's ſake, he gives his people a precious type of the ground on which he preſerves them in a ſtate of grace, notwithſtanding the multitude of their provocations. It is not for their own, but for Chriſt's ſake. He ever remembers all the *afflictions* of our New-Teſtament David, his obedience unto death. Therefore he will not utterly caſt us off, although we daily deſerve it.

Under

u Pſal. cxxxii. 1. 10. 17, 18.
v Pſal. lxxxix. 28, 29.
w Pſal. xviii. 20.
x Pſal. cxliii. 2.

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Under the Old Teſtament, the Meſſiah, although not yet come, was exhibited as the ſafeguard of the Church in that period. When, becauſe of prevailing wickedneſs, a powerful confederacy was formed by Syria and Iſrael, for the utter deſtruction of Judah, ſo that both king and people were ready to deſpair of deliverance; they were both directed to the promiſed Meſſiah as their bleſſed ſecurity. "The LORD himſelf "ſhall give you a ſign. Behold, a virgin ſhall "conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his "name Immanuel[y]." To the ſame quarter were they directed to look for deliverance from the powerful army of the king of Aſſyria, whoſe irruption is thus foretold, by an alluſion to an overwhelming inundation; "He ſhall paſs through "Judah, he ſhall overflow and go over, he ſhall "reach even to the neck, and the ſtretching out "of his wings ſhall fill the breadth of thy land, "O *Immanuel.*" But their defence lay in this very name. The relation which the land bore to him who was called by it, was the great demonſtration of the arrogance, impiety, and folly of the invader. This was the *land* of *Immanuel.* Its inhabitants, therefore, have the language of defiance and of triumph put in their mouths: "Aſſociate yourſelves, O ye people, and ye ſhall "be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of "far countries: gird yourſelves, and ye ſhall be "broken in pieces. Take counſel together, and "it ſhall come to nought; ſpeak the word, and "it

y Iſa. vii. 14.

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" it ſhall not ſtand: *for God is with us* [z]." Here we have at once the interpretation of the name *Immanuel*, and the myſtery of their preſervation. The ſame ground of ſecurity, againſt deſtruction from the ſame ſcourge, is otherwiſe expreſſed afterwards: " O my people, that dwelleth " in Zion, be not afraid of the Aſſyrian: he ſhall " ſmite thee with a rod, and ſhall lift up his ſtaff " againſt thee, after the manner of Egypt." But he ſhall be no more able to effect thy deſtruction, than was Egypt. Thy deliverance ſhall reſemble that which thou hadſt from Pharaoh. " The " LORD of hoſts ſhall ſtir up a ſcourge for him: " and as his rod was upon the ſea, ſo ſhall he lift " it up after the manner of Egypt," with a deſtruction equally ſudden and complete. " It ſhall " come to paſs in that day, that his burden ſhall " be taken away from off thy ſhoulder, and his " yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke ſhall be " deſtroyed becauſe of *the anointing* [a]."

So intimate is the connexion between the type and the antitype, that often, in the language of prophecy, the deſcription riſes in ſo wonderful a manner, either gradually or all at once, that we loſe ſight of the ſign in the thing ſignified. Thus, the evangelical prophet, when proclaiming the deliverance of his nation from the yoke of Babylon by means of Cyrus, and the confuſion of idolaters, ſuddenly expreſſes himſelf as if he had been all along ſpeaking of the great ſalvation: " I have raiſed him up in righteouſneſs, and I " will

z Iſa. viii. 8.—10. a Iſa. x. 24.—27.

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"will direct all his ways: he shall build my "city, and he shall let go my captives.—They "shall be ashamed, and be also confounded all "of them: they shall go to confusion together "that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be "saved *in the Lord* with an *everlasting* salvation: "ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world "without end [a]." This prophecy concerning the salvation of Israel could with no propriety be understood of the deliverance from Babylon. It can only respect that salvation of which Christ is the author; that salvation, of which it is an essential and unalienable character, that it is *eternal* [b]. Here the type brightens into the antitype; the shadow disappears, and the substance breaks forth into view.

v. The *union* of Israel unto God, as a peculiar people, was another ground of security. The Lord avouched them to be his peculiar people [c]. They were "a people near unto him [d]." He confirmed to himself his people Israel, to be a people unto him for ever [e]. They were joined to him by an everlasting espousals, so that he became the husband of the Church [f]; whence all her apostacy from him is represented under the notion of adultery. She bore the name of her divine husband, as a wife does among men, because legally viewed as one with him: "The "LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto "himself.

a Isa. xlv. 13, 16, 17. b Heb. v. 9. c Deut. xxvi. 18. d Psa. cxlviii. 14.
e 2 Sam. vii. 24. f Isa. liv. 5.; Hos. ii. 19, 20.

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" himſelf.—And all people of the earth ſhall ſee " that thou art called by the name of the LORD [h]." They enjoyed all the benefit of this union in relation to the Meſſiah. It was " becauſe of the " *anointing*" already mentioned. Therefore Chriſt and his ancient Church are often ſpoken of as one. There is a mutual interchange of names between them. The glorious Head, and the members of the Church, are often exhibited, as if they conſtituted only one perſon. His name is transferred to them. They are the *Chriſts*, the anointed of God [i]. Elſewhere he condeſcends to adopt their name. The characters, which in one place are appropriated to the Church, are in another applied to her Lord. " Thou Iſrael art *my ſervant*, " Jacob whom I have *choſen*, the ſeed of Abra- " ham my friend. Thou art my ſervant, I have " choſen thee, and not caſt thee away [k]."—" Be- " hold, my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in " whom my ſoul delighteth [l]." They were made partakers of this diſtinguiſhing privilege, and of all the benefits flowing from it, only in conſequence of the ſovereign choice of JEHOVAH [m]. Therefore, he would not annul all that he had done for them in his ſovereign mercy: as he declared by the prophet Samuel; " For the LORD " will not forſake his people, for his great name's " ſake: becauſe it hath pleaſed the LORD to make " you his people [n]." Even Balaam was aſſured of

h Deut. xxviii. 9, 10. i Pſal. cv. 15. k Iſa. xli. 8, 9.
l Iſa. xlii. 1.; Mat. xii. 18. m Deut. vii. 6. n 1 Sam. xii. 22.

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of this: "He hath bleſſed, and I cannot reverſe "it [o]."

Can it be denied, that we have here a lively figure of that grace of union which is conferred on all the ſpiritual Iſrael, and of the bleſſed ſecurity connected with it? They are "a peculiar "people [p]." They are "made nigh by the blood "of Chriſt [q]," united to the Father as their God and Father in him. They are married to Jeſus as their huſband, betrothed unto him for ever [r]. In as far as Chriſtians depart from their holy profeſſion, they have the ſame character given to them, which we find ſo often applied to God's ancient people. They are "adulterers and adulte-"reſſes [s]." In common with their Lord, all true believers bear the honourable name of Chriſt [t]. They are viewed as one in law with him; as dead and riſen with him; as partakers of the ſame complete juſtification, of which his reſurrection was the evidence; as "made the righ-"teouſneſs of God in him." By virtue of this union, they are eternally freed from condemnation. For "there is no condemnation to them "who are in Chriſt Jeſus." God hath bleſſed, and who can *reverſe* it? "It is God that juſti-"fieth, and who is he that condemneth?" All this bleſſedneſs flows from their election. They are "bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in hea-"venly places in Chriſt Jeſus, according as God "hath

o Numb. xxiii. 20. p 1 Pet. ii. 9. q Eph. ii. 13.
r Eph. v. 32.; Hoſ. ii. 18. s Jam. iv. 4. t 1 Cor. xii. 12.

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" hath chosen them in him before the foundation " of the world [u]."

VI. God would not altogether destroy his ancient people, because there was still a precious *seed* preserved among them. In the worst times the Lord retained a tithe for himself. Hence, even with respect to a time when there should " be a great forsaking in the midst of the land," it is promised; " Yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and " shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, " whose substance is in them, when they cast " their leaves: so the *holy seed* shall be the " substance thereof [v].—Thus saith the LORD, As " the new wine is found in the cluster, and one " saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so " will I do for my servants sake, that I may not " destroy them all [w]."

In like manner, the child of God cannot " work " sin;" he cannot again fall under its dominion, and be subjected to the curse; " for his seed re- " maineth in him [x]." He is " born of the in- " corruptible seed of the word [y]." He therefore cannot sin " unto death [z]." This is an essential character of the seed of the word, that it preserves from the total corruption in which the unrenewed lie, and from that final apostacy into which they fall.

VII. It was one of the distinguishing privileges of the Israelites, that God gave them his *Spirit*. Besides

u Eph. i. 3. v Isa. vi. 13. w Isa. lxv. 8. x 1 John iii. 9.
y 1 Pet. i. 23. z 1 John v. 16, 18.

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Beſides the gracious operations of the Spirit, which were confined to the elect among them, his influences were communicated, for the benefit of Iſrael in general, in a variety of ways. He was given as a Spirit of inſpiration to the penmen of Scripture, for the inſtruction of the Church, as Nehemiah acknowledges: "Thou gaveſt thy "good Spirit to inſtruct them [a]." He was communicated as a Spirit of prophecy, and alſo of miraculous operation. By him were men ſupplied with an extraordinary degree of bodily ſtrength, with wiſdom for government, with fortitude for war, with eminent qualifications for works of art [b]. They "rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit." Yet he ſtill continued among them: and this is pointed out as a ſpecial ground of conſolation under trial, and as an antidote againſt fear. When the Jews were diſheartened, becauſe the glory of their ſecond temple was ſo far inferior to that of the firſt, the following meſſage was delivered by the prophet Haggai; "I am with you, ſaith the LORD of "hoſts: according to the word that I covenanted "with you when ye came out of Egypt, ſo my "Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not [c]." They enjoyed the preſence of God in this reſpect, as a pledge of preſervation from total deſtruction: "*I am with thee*, ſaith the LORD, to ſave thee: "though I make a full end of all nations whither "I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full "end of thee [d]."

a Neh. ix. 20.
b See Owen on the Spirit, B. ii. chap. 1.
c Hag. ii. 4, 5.
d Jer. xxx. 11.

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This was undoubtedly a bleſſed emblem of the ſafety of all believers, as "builded up for an ha-"bitation of God through the Spirit." He is conferred on them in all his gifts and graces, according to the ſtate of the Church, or their peculiar calls. He acts in them all, as "the Spirit of "wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of "Chriſt." He ſupplies them with fortitude in their ſpiritual warfare; and by him they are "ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man." Some, like Bezaleel and Aholiab of old, are furniſhed with peculiar gifts for labouring in the work of the ſanctuary [e]. Often do his people provoke their gracious God. But he deals with them, as he did with David. He caſts them not away from his preſence; nor takes his Holy Spirit from them. On the contrary, he brings them to evangelical repentance, thus reſtores to them the joy of his ſalvation, and upholds them with his *free* Spirit [f]; with the influences of that Spirit, who is no leſs ſovereign in all his operations on the renewed ſoul, than he was in the work of regeneration itſelf. The very deſign of the miſſion of this gracious Comforter, is that he may abide with them for ever [g]; and "ſeal" them, as the LORD's peculiar treaſure, "unto the day of "redemption [h]."

VIII. God often ſaved Iſrael, in the day of their provocation, or of their danger, at the *interceſſion* of

e Exod. xxxi. 1—5. f Pſal. li. 12, 11. g John xiv. 16.
h Eph. i. 13, 14.; v. 30.

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of his ſervants. Thus Moſes interceded for the people, when God threatened to deſtroy them becauſe of their idolatry; and afterwards, when they murmured at the report of the ſpies: and in both inſtances his interceſſion was ſucceſsful [i]. When they rebelled becauſe of the diſplay of divine vengeance againſt Korah and his aſſociates, and the plague brake forth among them, Aaron ran into the midſt of the congregation, with his flaming cenſer in his hand, and made atonement. He "ſtood between the living and the dead, and "the plague was ſtayed [k]." David, in like manner, after he had himſelf provoked the LORD by numbering the people, made interceſſion, as he alſo offered ſacrifices. "So the LORD was en-"treated for the land, and the plague was ſtayed "from Iſrael [l]."

Many other inſtances might be given of the ſucceſs of interceſſion in the experience of Iſrael. But it is evident, that theſe three perſons, in all the inſtances mentioned, acted expreſsly as types of Chriſt; and as prefiguring both the truth, and the ſucceſs, of his interceſſion. Moſes acted as a Mediator between God and his people; Aaron as "the ſaint, the holy One, of God;" David as his Anointed. There was ſomething highly emblematical in the very circumſtances of their interceſſion. Moſes propoſed to make an atonement for the ſin of Iſrael. He, as has been ſeen in a former ſection, expreſſed his reſolution to devote

i Exod xxxii. 10. 30.—32.; Numb. xiv. 11.—20.

k Numb. xvi. 47, 48. l 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, 25.

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himſelf for them. "If thou wilt," he ſays, "for-"give their ſin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, "out of thy book which thou haſt written." The Man of God ſeems determined either to periſh with, or for, his beloved Iſrael; unwilling to enjoy any mercy that he might not hold in common with them. Aaron ruſhed in between the vengeance of the Almighty and offending Iſrael. He ſubſtituted himſelf as a mark for the arrows of divine wrath. David did the ſame. When he ſaw the angel that ſmote the people, he ſaid unto the LORD; "Lo, I have ſinned, and I have "done wickedly: but theſe ſheep, what have "they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be "againſt me." In all this, do we not ſee the character, and the conduct, of the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the ſheep, who intercedes for them on the ground of the atonement he hath made? "If any man ſin, we have an "advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righ-"teous: and he is the propitiation for our ſins[m]." Satan would have us, that he might ſift us as wheat: and when he ſifts, he wiſhes to retain nothing but the chaff in his ſieve. But Jeſus prays for us, that our faith fail not[n]. "If, when we "were enemies, we were reconciled to God by "the death of his Son: much more, being recon-"ciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life[o]," as our interceding High-prieſt. Did the LORD ſay to Moſes, "I have pardoned according to thy word?" And may we not be aſſured, that the Father grants to

[m] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [n] Luke xxii. 31, 32. [o] Rom. v. 10.; Heb. vii. 25.

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to the true Mediator "all his heart's deſire;" and particularly when he aſks in behalf of his people "life of him, even length of days for ever and "ever[p]?" Did he accept of the typical ſacrifices, and of the ſmoke of incenſe, as making atonement? Were theſe of any worth in his ſight? No, ſurely; but in as far as they prefigured the perfect atonement and ever-prevalent interceſſion of our glorious Surety.

IX. The ancient people of God were preſerved from deſtruction, by a conſtant exerciſe of almighty *power*, by the hand of that *Angel* whom he promiſed as their leader. This glorious Angel, as has been formerly obſerved, was no other than our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, acting as "the Meſ-"ſenger of the covenant;" and, according to the character of that diſpenſation, figuratively manifeſting the nature of his office with reſpect to all who are Iſraelites indeed. Concerning him the Father declared; "Behold, I ſend an Angel "before thee, to *keep thee in the way*, and to "*bring* thee into the *place* which I have *prepa-"red*[q]." It was this Angel of God's preſence, who "ſaved them,—bare them, and carried them "all the days of old[r]." He exerciſed unremitted watchfulneſs over them. Hence it is ſaid; "He will not ſuffer thy foot to be moved.— "Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael ſhall neither "ſlumber nor ſleep[s]." His tender care of his people is repreſented under the moſt expreſſive

p Pſal. xxi. 2. 4. q Exod. xxiii. 20. r Iſa. lxiii. 9. s Pſal. cxxi. 3 4.

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metaphors. He appeared as the "Shepherd of "Iſrael, who led Joſeph as a flock [t]." He had promiſed to Abraham that to his ſeed he would give "all the land of Canaan for an everlaſting "poſſeſſion [u]."—He accordingly "led them on "ſafely, ſo that they feared not;—and he brought "them to the border of his ſanctuary, even to "this mountain which his right hand had pur-"chaſed." "He led him about, he inſtructed "him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As "an eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her "young, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; "ſo the LORD alone did lead him [w]." It was the privilege of the literal Iſrael, as being externally "an *holy* people," to be preſerved by Chriſt; as Moſes ſings: "Yea, he loved the people; all his "ſaints are in thy hand [x]." As really as his mercy was conſpicuous in their redemption, his power was diſplayed in their continued preſervation: "Thou in thy *mercy* haſt led forth the people "whom thou haſt redeemed: thou haſt guided "them in thy *ſtrength* unto thy holy habitation [y]."

Often, as the puniſhment of their iniquities, he ſuffered them to be for a time led captive by their heathen foes, whom he "left to prove Iſ-"rael." But when they cried unto him, he ſtill delivered them [z]. The lamp that God lighted up among them, often became, through their own wickedneſs, like "a ſmoking flax." But he would

t Pſal lxxx. i. u. Gen. xvii. 8. v Pſal. lxxviii. 53. 54.
w Deut. xxxii. 10—12. x Deut. xxxiii. 3. y Exod. xv. 13.
z Judg. iii. 1. 9. 15. vi. 6. 14. &c.

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would not ſuffer it at any time to be totally extinguiſhed, becauſe it was ordained for his anointed. Their preſervation, indeed, ſeems to be ſolely the effect of one continued miracle. Nothing but the wonderful operation of divine power could have preſerved them in Egypt, when the whole nation conſpired for their deſtruction. During forty years were they miraculouſly ſupported in the wilderneſs. The heavens gave them bread, and the flinty rock ſupplied them with water. Had their nouriſhing dew been withheld, or the rock been dried up, for a few days; the whole people muſt have periſhed. Although ſupported by ordinary means, after they were brought to Canaan, their deliverances were often entirely miraculous; and their continued preſervation, in the midſt of ſo many powerful nations, that ſtill ſought to deſtroy them, can ſcarcely be viewed in any other light.

Now, as we are certain that this tender care was no ways merited by Iſrael, it is no leſs evident that all the glory that redounded to God, from the diſplays of his mercy and power, in their outward deliverance, cannot reaſonably be viewed as an object in itſelf ſufficiently worthy of the means employed. If we do not view their wonderful preſervation as ſtrictly typical of the preſervation of a people formed by God for himſelf, in a far ſuperior way to ſhew forth his praiſe; we muſt be for ever at a loſs to perceive infinite wiſdom in this ſeries of miracles. It would ſeem to be but a waſte of mercy and of power, if they

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were never meant to ſubſerve ſome higher end. But for our ſakes eſpecially were theſe things done, and for our ſakes were they written, that we might know that our help cometh only from the Lord.

The very language, which is uſed in the Old Teſtament with reſpect to the preſervation of this peculiar people, is in the New, appropriated to them who believe. The ſame Angel of the covenant ſtabliſhes his ſaints, and *keeps* them from evil [a]. He could teſtify to his Father, that, while he was in the world, he had kept them in his name [b]. While about to leave it, he ſaid to them; "I go to *prepare* a *place* for you. And—"I will come again, and receive you unto my-"ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo [c]." As "the good Shepherd, he calleth his own ſheep "by name, and leadeth them out: and when he "putteth forth his own ſheep, he *goeth before* "them." Concerning them he graciouſly ſaith; "I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall "never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out "of *my hand* [d]." When they are begotten again, it is "to a lively hope,—to an inheritance" far ſurpaſſing that which was its figure, "an inheri-"tance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fa-"deth not away, reſerved in heaven for them, "who are kept by the power of God, through "faith unto ſalvation." That gift of the Spirit, of which we have already ſpoken, is evidently deſcribed

a 2 Theſ. iii. 3. b John xvii. 12. c John xiv. 2. 3.
d John x. 3. 4. 28. e 1 Pet. 1. 3.—5.

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deſcribed in language borrowed from the typical mercies of Iſrael. It is "the earneſt of our inhe-"ritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed "poſſeſſion [f]." All who are "ſanctified by God "the Father," are "preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus [g]." He does not entirely deliver them from their ſpiritual enemies. He "ſlays them not, leſt his "people ſhould forget [h]." Paul, as a renewed perſon, thus declares his experience; "I ſee ano-"ther law in my members, warring againſt the "law of my mind, and bringing me into capti-"vity to the law of ſin which is in my mem-"bers." Hence his people complain of wretch-edneſs. But by faith they are aſſured of deliver-ance through Jeſus Chriſt their Lord [i]. Grace in their ſouls is often as "a ſmoking flax." But ſo gracious is their almighty Redeemer, that the "ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend "forth judgment unto victory [k]."

If a miracle be ſomething entirely beyond the power of nature, what is the preſervation of the children of God but a continued miracle. As they were at firſt "born from above," the whole of thoſe ſupplies that are neceſſary for the ſupport of this life come from the ſame quarter. They feed on "the hidden manna." They drink of "the pure river of the water of life." They continue in a wilderneſs, where there is neither bread nor water for their ſouls. They are en-compaſſed with pits, and ſnares, and beaſts of prey; conſtantly fighting with enemies, and eſ-pecially

f Eph. i. 14. g Jude i. h Pſal. lix. 11. i Rom. vii. 23—25.
k Matth. xii. 20.

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pecially with a body of ſin in their own hearts. The power that preſerves them from periſhing, in ſuch circumſtances, is entirely ſupernatural.

The doctrine of divine conſervation affords encouragement to the children of God, when labouring under a ſenſe of guilt that threatens to overwhelm them, or when they may be apt to conclude that ſin is about to regain its empire in their hearts. Thoſe who never felt the arrows of the Almighty, or who ſtill continue ſtrangers to the dreadful power of ſin in the ſoul, may depreciate this doctrine as at beſt unprofitable. But it cannot be viewed in this light by any who know what is meant by "a wounded ſpirit, or who have been "toſſed with tempeſt." In ſuch a ſituation, a believing view of the eternity and immutability of divine love, of its ſovereignty as overlooking our continued unworthineſs, can alone give relief. Hither alſo muſt we turn our eye for comfort, when ſin rages and threatens to deſtroy. This is the conſolation that God himſelf exhibits: "Sin ſhall not have dominion over "you; for ye are—under grace.—He that hath "begun a good work, will perform it unto the "day of Jeſus Chriſt."

We may alſo learn, that although the believer is ſecured in a ſtate of grace, no room is left for the indulgence of carnal ſecurity, no encouragement is given to continue in ſin. Many decry this doctrine, as if it were adverſe to the intereſts of holineſs. The contrary is clear from the hiſtory of God's ancient people. Even while he proclaimed

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proclaimed the eternity of his love, he denounced the ſevereſt judgments as the puniſhment of apoſtacy; and when they actually departed from him, he fulfilled his threatenings. "He deli-"vered his ſtrength into captivity, and his glory "into the enemies hand." God would not break his covenant with David, notwithſtanding his great treſpaſs in the matter of Uriah. But did the divine conduct afford any encouragement to him, or to any believer, to ſin? Was not David informed, that therefore the ſword ſhould never depart from his houſe: and was not this threatening awfully verified in ſucceeding generations?

In a ſimilar manner does he deal with the people of his love, when they provoke him by their iniquities. He withdraws from them the light of his countenance, ſuffers them to be led into captivity for a time by the power of their luſts, and to loſe the perſuaſion of his covenant-love. They are tried, it may be, ever after with darkneſs as to their eternal ſtate. The Almighty, perhaps, gives a command to his terrors to "ſet "themſelves in array" againſt them. Or, they are buffeted by Satan, by means of the moſt horrid temptations. Or, he chaſtens them outwardly by ſevere bodily afflictions, by great temporal calamities, affecting their ſubſtance or reputation; by removing their deareſt earthly comforts, "the deſire of their eyes." Can theſe things be viewed as no check to ſin? Is the ſoul of a Chriſtian caſt in ſuch a mould, that nothing but

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but the fear of eternal perdition can prevail with him?

Notwithſtanding the declarations of the perpetuity of God's love to his ancient people, they had no encouragement to expect the renewed evidences of this love, unleſs they returned to him from whom they had revolted [k]. Such is his conduct towards his ſpiritual Iſrael. The LORD ſtill ſays; "I will go and return to my place, "till they acknowledge their iniquity." According to the divine teſtimony, they have no reaſon to expect deliverance from judgments, or the renewed manifeſtations of his love, without turning from their evil ways.

We may add to theſe conſiderations, that when there appeared any thing like true repentance among God's ancient people, it always eſpecially proceeded from a ſenſe of his love. The great argument, which he employed to enforce, not merely the firſt precept, but the whole law, is founded on the principle of gratitude; and the very name which he ſtill renders effectual with his children: "I am the LORD thy God, "which have brought thee out of the land of "Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage. Thou "ſhalt have no other gods before me. Thou "ſhalt not bow down," &c. The ſevereſt judgments with which they were viſited, never brought them back to a ſenſe of duty. When a ſincere or general reformation took place, they were principally

k Deut. xxx. 1.—3.; 1 Kings viii. 31.—54.

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principally affected by a diſcovery of federal love [1]. This is a proof, among many others, that the doctrine we have illuſtrated, inſtead of being an encouragement to ſin, can alone prove a proper incitement to duty. It is thus in the experience of the children of God. When they feel the rod only, they are "as a bullock unac-"cuſtomed to the yoke." But the love of Chriſt, when ſhed abroad in their hearts, eſpecially when manifeſted in its glorious ſovereignty and immutability, *conſtraineth* them.

This doctrine, in a word, ſupplies us with conſolation under the greateſt adverſities. The LORD often ſeverely afflicted that nation, or that family, which he had choſen. But he did it in love. This was deſigned for our inſtruction. How ſeverely ſoever we may be afflicted, let us not for this reaſon call in queſtion the love of God. Still he ſaith to us; "I will never, never "leave thee.—My love will I not take from him. "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will "be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall "not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through "the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall "the flames kindle on thee. For I am the LORD "*thy God*, the holy One of Iſrael, *thy Saviour*." We may be fully aſſured, that even our afflictions, inſtead of tending to our deſtruction, are meant in ſubſerviency to our ſalvation; that they "work

[1] 2 Chron. xx. —9.; xxx. 6. 9.; Ezra ix. 8, 9. 13. 15.; Neh. ix. 7. —31.; Dan. ix. 4. 9. 15. 18.

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" work together for good ;"—that " when we are " judged, we are chaſtened of the LORD, that we " ſhould not be condemned with the world ;" that he chaſtens us " for our profit, that we may " be partakers of his holineſs ;" and that he will at length put this ſong in our mouths, " We went " through fire and through water ; but thou " broughteſt us out into a wealthy place."

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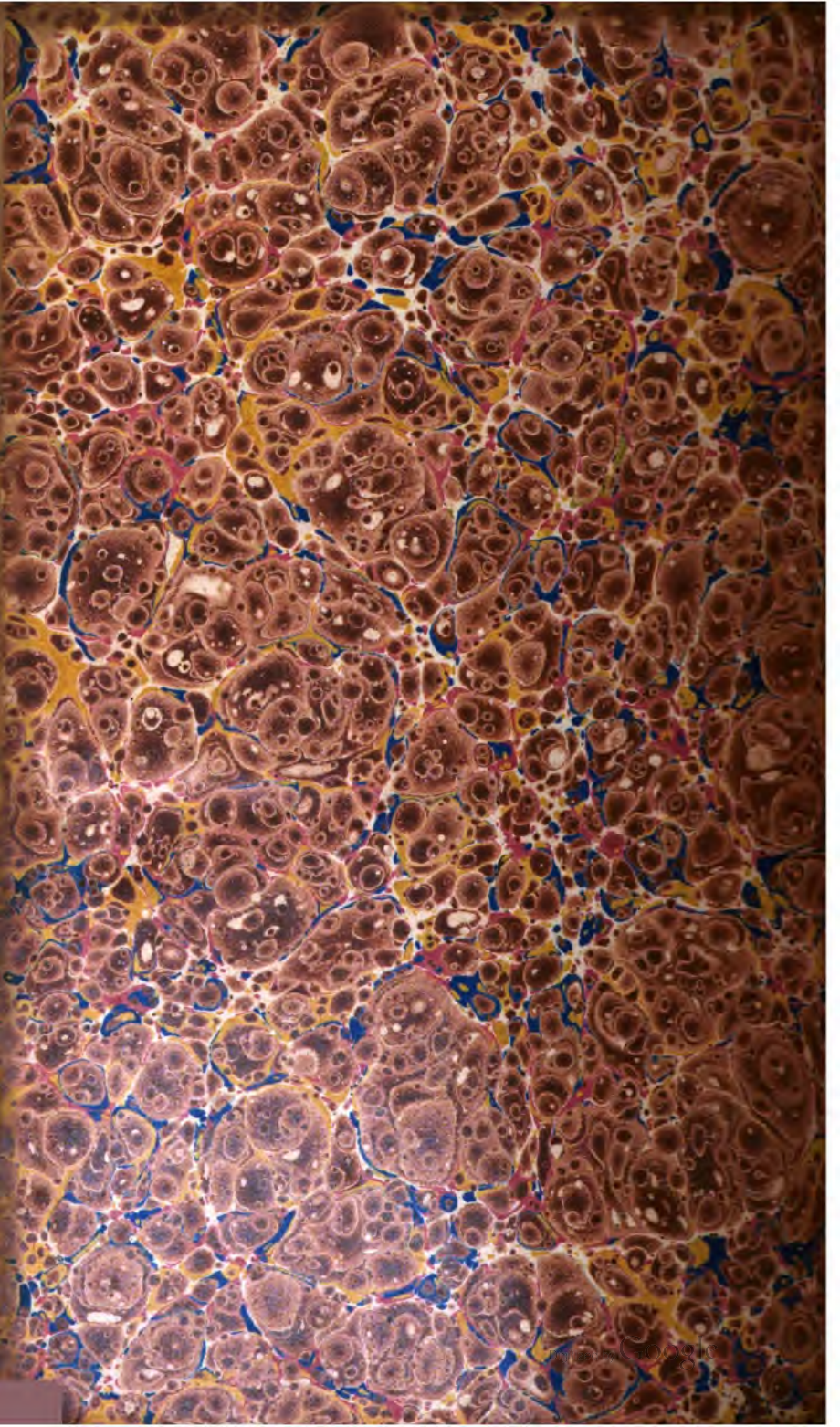
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